

WELLBEING

Flavour of the Month?

New research suggests foods previously consigned to the nutritional wilderness should be back on the menu. We reveal the health benefits said to lie behind the “naughty” items in your diet

If you stopped consuming milk and eggs because of fat and cholesterol concerns, waved goodbye to watermelon for fear of its high sugar content and went nut free to avoid excess calories, you may be missing out on some vital health benefits, according to new research. Here’s why it may be time to let these foods back into your diet.

Watermelon

Many people avoid watermelon because of its high fruit sugar content, but a report published in the *American Journal of Hypertension* says that eating a couple of slices each day can help reduce blood pressure levels in people with weight problems.

Over a 12-week period, researchers at Florida State University examined 13 middle-age obese men and women who suffered from hypertension. Half of the group was given a daily dose of watermelon extract while the rest received a placebo, swapping after six weeks. They were told not to change their lifestyle in any other way. In the meantime, every day they had their blood pressure measured, both at room temperature and with one of their hands held in cold water – cold weather forces the heart to work harder to pump blood around the body, increasing the risk of a heart attack or stroke among vulnerable groups such as those with high blood pressure or the obese.

At the end of the trial, the researchers discovered that the watermelon extract had lowered blood pressure and reduced cardiac stress both when participants were at rest and when they were exposed to the cold water. 





Milk

If you suffer from osteoarthritis in the knees, drinking milk could help. According to scientists from the Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston, a glass of fat-free or low-fat milk each day may slow down the symptoms in women with the degenerative condition.

Their conclusions came after a four-year study of the milk consumption of more than 1,200 women and 800 men suffering from osteoarthritis. Over the course of the research, the scientists measured the space between the bones of the knee in each participant, an established clinical method of following the progression of the disease, which causes the gaps between the joints to narrow.

While all the women experienced some narrowing during the four years, it was less evident among those who drank more milk. Those who drank none at all had an average

decrease of 0.38mm, while in high consumers (drinking more than 7 glasses a week) it was just 0.26mm. Even drinking just three glasses a week had an impact, with an average space of 0.29mm.

Interestingly, other dairy products did not have the same effect – yoghurt made no difference at all while cheese seemed to worsen the condition – and the men in the study only showed reduced deterioration of the joint space when consuming very high levels of milk.

Eggs

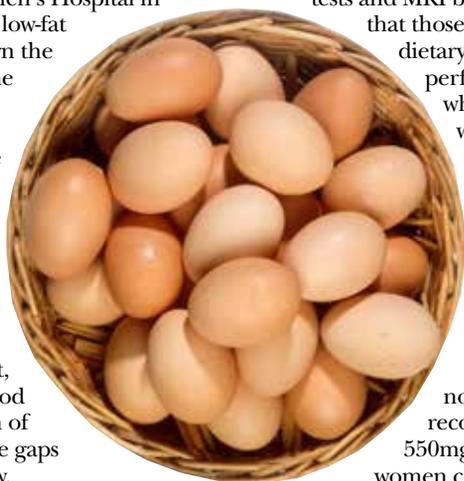
Could eating two eggs a day boost your memory? Egg yolks are one of the best dietary sources of the nutrient choline, which protects memory and cognitive function, and researchers at Tufts University in Massachusetts are currently carrying out a study on their effects on cognitive function.

Scientists are hoping to substantiate the conclusions of an earlier study at Boston University in which people who ate a diet rich in this B-group vitamin were found to perform better in memory tests and were less likely to show brain changes associated with dementia.

In the Boston research, scientists asked nearly 1,400 adults aged 36 to 83 to complete dietary questionnaires between 1991 and 1995 before, a few years later, undergoing a series of cognitive tests and MRI brain scans. The tests found

that those participants with a higher dietary intake of choline performed better than those who consumed very little, even when factors such as education and fat and calorie intake were taken into consideration. Their MRI scans were also less likely to show the changes in the brain's blood vessels, which indicate a risk of stroke or dementia.

Although the research is not conclusive, it is recommended that men have 550mg of choline a day and women consume 495mg.



Almonds

Want to lose weight? Then try eating high-calorie almonds. Crazy as it seems, not all calories are



equal, according to a weight-loss study carried out by scientists at the City of Hope National Medical Centre along with the Loma Linda University, both in California.

The research looked at 65 overweight and obese adults split into two groups. Each group was given a 1,000-calorie-a-day liquid diet but one of them was given an extra 84g of almonds each day while the other group was allowed a mixture of complex carbohydrates, including wheat crackers, baked potatoes and air-popped popcorn. The two diets were equal in calories and protein but differed in fat content. In addition to the liquid diet, all participants could also have salad with a lemon juice or vinegar dressing.

Over the 24 weeks of the study, while both groups had lost weight, the group that supplemented their diet with the almonds saw an 18 per cent reduction in weight and body mass index compared with an 11 per cent reduction in the complex-carbs dieters. Additionally, waist circumference in the almond group decreased by 14 per cent compared to 9 per cent in the non-almond group, suggesting that a small amount of almonds each day can help with weight loss and body composition. **M**

HEALTH NOTES



Total wipe-out Runny noses, tears, foods, felt tip pen – children's faces tend to get covered in all types of mess, but there has to be a more hygienic solution to cleaning up your little one than spitting on a tissue. The answer is Boogie Wipes (£1.20 per pack), which are saline-infused to help break down everything from dried-on food to mucus without causing irritation to sensitive young skin. Visit boogiewipes.ie

Super foods Bradley Cooper's girlfriend Suki Waterhouse has turned to The Detox Kitchen food delivery service to help her stay in shape. The model tweeted this pic of herself in hair and make-up on a photoshoot eating one of its super-healthy salads. Boxes cost from £29.99 per day. Visit detoxkitchen.co.uk



In the pink Take the pain out of your period with Pink Parcel, a personalised subscription service that aims to make your cycle less of a hassle. For £9.95 a month, you receive a supply of tampon or towels – or a mix of the two – along with carry cases to pop in your handbag and an array of treats, including skincare and chocolate. Visit pinkparcel.co.uk

