



## Food Synergy – Perfect Pairings that Work Better Together

Sometimes when we are so focused on the health benefits of one certain vitamin or phytonutrient in foods, we might end up missing the bigger picture and the most important point of a healthy diet---each nutrient within our foods plays a different role in our health, and it's important to eat a variety of whole foods. There is also something called food synergy, which means that when we eat certain types of foods together, their nutrients are more powerful than when they are eaten alone.

Years ago it was discovered that our body has a difficult time absorbing iron from our foods, but by pairing the iron-containing foods (beans, meats, fish, and some leafy green veggies like spinach and kale) with foods that contain vitamin C (citrus fruits, pineapple, strawberries, bell peppers, broccoli and cauliflower), our body is able to absorb more iron. Vitamin C is an acid, and acids are able to extract more iron out of our foods to make it more available for our body to absorb. One study showed that by adding just 63 milligrams of vitamin C (the amount in half of a bell pepper or 1 small orange) to a meal, tripled the absorption of iron from spinach and other leafy greens.

This was an early example of food synergy.

Scientists today are beginning to unravel the mysteries of how the nutrients in food work together. A decade ago, we didn't even know about phytonutrients like lycopene (the one that gives tomatoes their red color and cancer fighting properties) or anthocyanins in blueberries or epicatechin in dark chocolate (which have propelled these foods into the category of superfoods).

Many new food synergies have been discovered in the last 10 years. For instance, broccoli contains the cancer-fighting phytonutrients beta-carotene, indoles, and isothiocyanates. Broccoli also contains compounds that are formed when it is either cut or chewed—compounds that have been shown to kill off cancer cells. Tomatoes are loaded with cancer-fighting antioxidants such as lycopene, vitamin C, and vitamin A.

Both tomatoes and broccoli offer great health benefits on their own, but research suggests that eating them together has even more potent health effects. Studies have shown that prostate tumors grew much slower in laboratory animals fed both tomato and broccoli extracts, compared to animals that ate either broccoli or tomato extracts alone, or animals given lycopene as a supplement to their regular diet.

This is just one example of a synergistic cancer-fighting effect we can all benefit from. Another is the synergy of eating healthy types of fat such as avocado, olive oil, nuts, seeds, or coconut oil with salads or cooked vegetables, as many of their nutrients and antioxidants require fat to be absorbed into our body. The idea of a fat-free salad dressing does nothing for our health!

Here are just a handful of examples in which different nutrients and components in food work together synergistically: (See back of sheet)

# FOOD SYNERGY

## The Power of Food Pairing



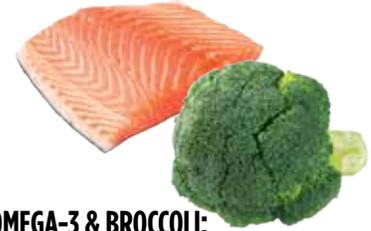
### **TOMATO & AVOCADO:**

Lycopene in tomatoes is best absorbed in the intestinal tract when combined with healthy fats like avocado.



### **TOMATO & BROCCOLI:**

The cancer-fighting substances in tomatoes and broccoli work best when paired together, than when eaten alone.



### **OMEGA-3 & BROCCOLI:**

The carotenoids and vitamin C found in broccoli combined with the omega-3 fatty acids found in foods like salmon and tuna boost their brain health properties.



### **GARLIC & FISH:**

Alone, both fish and garlic fight inflammation. When eaten together, research shows that this combination lowers LDL (bad) cholesterol more effectively, than eating them alone.



### **SALMON & RED WINE:**

Plant compounds in grapes known as polyphenols do more than promote good circulation. They also help your body absorb more of the brain-healthy omega-3s in fish.



### **ALMONDS & RED WINE:**

Together, the antioxidant resveratrol in red wine and the vitamin E in almonds boost the body's ability to thin the blood and improve the health of blood vessel linings.



### **BEET GREENS/BEET ROOT & CHICKPEAS:**

Chickpeas are a good source of B6, which helps your body absorb magnesium, which is in beet greens. These nutrients work together to ease symptoms of PMS and ADHD.



### **LEMON & GREEN TEA:**

Vitamin C in lemons allows the body to absorb catechins (antioxidants) in green tea, increasing the benefits of green tea.



### **LEMON & KALE OR SPINACH:**

Vitamin C in lemons makes plant-based iron (found in foods like kale and spinach) more absorbable in the body.



### **BANANAS & YOGURT:**

This duo maximizes absorption of muscle-repairing glucose and amino acids. After intense exercise, this combination speeds up muscle recovery while strengthening muscle cells.



### **TURMERIC & BLACK PEPPER:**

Adding black pepper to turmeric or turmeric-spiced food enhances curcumin's bioavailability by 1,000 times.



### **RASPBERRIES OR APPLES & CHOCOLATE:**

Scientists have discovered that when raspberries or apples and chocolate are paired together, their disease-fighting flavonoids (quercetin in apples and raspberries and catechin in chocolate) are even more effective at thinning the blood and improving heart health.



## ANY VEGGIE EASY COCONUT CURRY

This is a versatile recipe that allows you to use any veggies that you have on hand!

### For the curry:

- 1 tablespoon coconut oil
- 1/2 yellow onion, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 teaspoon curry powder
- 1 tablespoon ground turmeric OR a 2" piece of fresh turmeric, peeled and diced
- 1 (13.5 oz.) can coconut milk
- 1/2 cup water
- 1 tablespoon tamari sauce or soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon pure maple syrup or coconut sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon sea salt or Himalayan pink salt
- 1/2 teaspoon black pepper
- 1 medium sized sweet potato or Yukon gold potato, diced
- 1 lb. assorted vegetables, chopped (fresh or thawed from frozen) - suggested types are broccoli, carrots, cauliflower, green beans, snap peas, bell peppers

### To complete the dish:

- 2 cups cooked quinoa or brown rice

Place the coconut oil in a large skillet or saute pan over medium heat. Add the onions and garlic and sauté until tender, about 5 minutes.

Add in the coconut milk, curry powder, turmeric, tamari, maple syrup or coconut sugar, salt and pepper and whisk well to combine.

Bring the sauce to a simmer and add in the chopped potatoes. Cover the pan, and allow the potatoes to steam in the sauce for about 5 minutes.

Add in the remaining vegetables, cover and allow them to steam until fork-tender, about another 5 to 7 minutes, depending on which types of vegetables you use.

Serve over warm cooked quinoa or brown rice.

Serves: 2 - 4

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## SPIRALIZED BEET SALAD

- 1-2 raw golden beets ends sliced off
- 2 cups chopped kale, stems removed
- 4-5 cherry tomatoes
- 1/4 cup chickpeas, rinsed and drained
- 1 clove of garlic
- 1 lemon
- Olive Oil
- Cumin
- Salt
- Pepper
- 1-2 tablespoons Parmesan cheese, grated

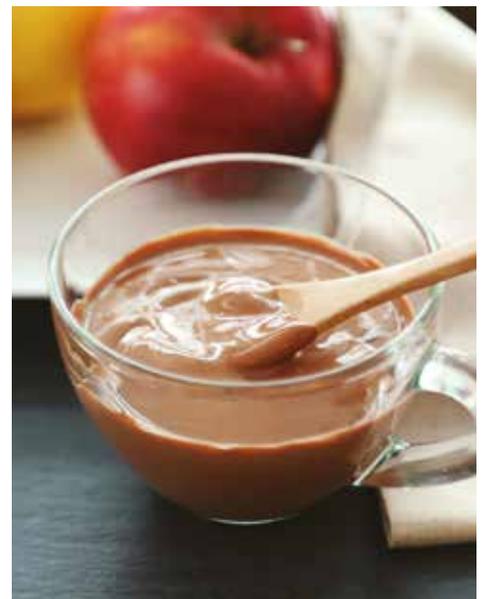
1. Preheat oven to 425 degrees. Spiralize or dice the beets and place them on a baking sheet with aluminum foil. Drizzle olive oil on top and toss so it's evenly spread on the beets. Top with a little bit of cumin, salt, and pepper. Bake for about 15 minutes (longer if diced beets). Mix the beets around and bake for another 5-10.
2. Place kale in a bowl. Drizzle some olive oil, salt, and lemon, and massage kale leaves so they soften (a couple of minutes).
3. Finely chop your garlic, forming a paste (or use a garlic press) .
4. Toss garlic in kale with the juice of your lemon, adding olive oil as needed.
5. Top with chickpeas, chopped tomatoes, and beet noodles. Sprinkle with Parmesan cheese.

## CHOCOLATE DIPPING SAUCE

This chocolate sauce is great for fondue without the flame. It stays fluid at room temperature and takes only a couple of minutes to put together. You can dip strawberries, raspberries, apples, bananas, anything you want. The butter or coconut oil is optional but adds a velvetiness and gloss to the sauce.

- 1/2 cup good quality chocolate chips or chopped chocolate (semisweet or dark chocolate)
- 1/4 cup coconut milk or almond milk
- 1 tablespoon butter or coconut oil (optional)

Combine chocolate and milk in a small saucepan and heat over very low heat on the stove, whisking until well-combined and smooth. Add butter or coconut oil and stir until butter is melted and chocolate sauce is smooth. Pour into a serving bowl and allow people to drizzle over fruit or skewer fruit and dip like fondue.



**WATCH KIMBERLY'S COOKING DEMONSTRATION HERE:**

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## There are three keys to preventing muscle imbalances.

First, try your best to maintain proper posture throughout the day whether you are seated or standing. If we have become imbalanced over time, it may require you to constantly think and re-correct your body position.

Second, your workouts should include exercises to specifically strengthen the muscles or muscle groups that tend to become lengthened and weakened over time. Those muscles tend to be the triceps (back of the arms), rhomboids (upper back), and glutes (back of hips).

Third, your stretching portion of your workout (which many of us tend to skip over, but is really important to incorporate into your daily activities) should include stretches that elongate the muscles or muscle groups that tend to be tight, such as your biceps (front of arms), pectorals (chest), and hip flexors (front of hips).

Try incorporating the following moves into your workout to strengthen your glutes and lengthen your hip flexors.

### **Quadruped Bent-knee Hip Extensions**

1. Begin in a hands and knees (quadruped) position on an exercise mat or floor. Your knees and feet should be hip-width apart, hands under your shoulders, fingers pointing forward and your feet pointing toward the wall behind you. Engage your core and abdominal muscles, keeping the spine in neutral. Do not sag or arch the low back.

2. Maintain a strong, stable core and lift the left leg, keeping the knee bent. Engage the glute (butt) muscles to press the left foot upward toward the ceiling. Move only at the hip joint. Perform 30 repetitions with the left leg before switching legs and performing the same number of repetitions with the right leg.

The degree to which the leg can be pressed upward is determined by the ability to control/prevent movement in the low back. As the leg is raised, individuals may notice the low back sagging. Only raise the leg to a height where the low back position can be stabilized by engaging the core and abdominal muscles. If you would like to modify and make this exercise harder, you can place a dumbbell behind the knee to increase resistance.

### **Kneeling Triplanar Lunge:**

1. From a kneeling position, place the right foot down on the floor in front of the right hip. The right knee is directly over the right ankle (marriage proposal position). Engage your abdominal muscles to stabilize your spine. Pull your shoulder blades down and back without arching your low back. Keep the chest lifted. Your chin should be parallel to the ground and your arms by your side.

2. Frontal Plane: Reach your right arm toward the ceiling but keep your shoulders away from your ears. Stretch your right arm toward the left wall as you bend the torso at the waist. Notice that your weight must shift to the right to counter balance this movement. Do not arch the low back or round the shoulders forward. Keep the shoulders square to the front. The left shoulder reaches toward the ground. Perform 2-4 repetitions, holding the stretch for 15-30 seconds each. Change the starting position by kneeling on the right knee with the left leg in front and repeat on the other side.

3. Sagittal Plane: From starting position, reach your right arm toward the ceiling but keep your shoulders away from your ears. Reach your left arm toward the ground. Keeping your left knee pressed into the ground, lean forward into your right hip. At the same time, reach your right arm toward the wall behind you. Do not arch the low back. The left fingers are reaching toward the ground. To further increase the stretch to the front of your left hip (hip flexors) squeeze and contract the left glute (butt) muscles. Perform 2-4 repetitions, holding the stretch for 15-30 seconds each. Change the starting position by kneeling on the right knee with the left leg in front and repeat on the other side.

4. Transverse Plane: From starting position, place your right hand behind your head. Rotate your torso to the left while slowly leaning forward into your right hip. Do not arch the low back. Keep the head and chest lifted and the ribcage knitted together. Perform 2-4 repetitions, holding the stretch for 15-30 seconds each. Change starting position placing your left leg in front and repeat on the other side.



Watch these (and more!) on YouTube: [goo.gl/pmJP1T](https://goo.gl/pmJP1T)



## Are your relationships toxic or perfect pairings?

Take time to think about your friendships/relationships. They can be friends you spend a lot of time with, or ones you only see occasionally. Take a hard look at the kinds of friends you surround yourself with, the kind of friend YOU are being,

Make a list of your friends and leave space after each name for notes.

Spend time in prayer asking God to see what He sees. Go through the list above and write down some of their characteristics that come to mind—healthy and unhealthy.

### CHARACTERISTICS OF A TOXIC RELATIONSHIP:

- It's draining you.
- The other person is not supportive.
- The other person is not meeting you half-way.
- The other person shows no repentance or offers forgiveness.

We certainly are not saying if you have a friend who exhibits one of these traits, you should kick them to the curb. Take these relationships to God in prayer. Ask Him what He would like you to do.

**Ask God for wisdom (James 1:5) Does He want you to encourage or let go?**

### CHARACTERISTICS OF A HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP:

- You are uplifted by the time you spend together.
- You pray for each other.
- You encourage each other on a regular basis.
- You each admit when you have caused hurt and ask for forgiveness.

***Remember to attract quality friendships, you must be willing to put the effort into being a quality friend yourself.***

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