



Functional Foods

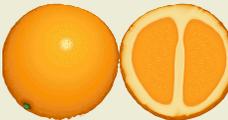
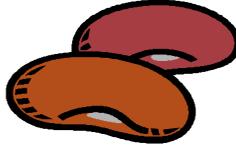
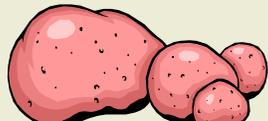


What is a functional food? Functional foods are foods that provide health benefits beyond basic nutrition. They contain substances called phytochemicals, like lycopene in tomatoes, that may help promote health.

What types of health benefits do they provide? These phytochemicals may help lower the risk for cancer, heart disease, diabetes, and blindness caused by macular degeneration (a condition that causes blindness in many elderly people).

Could I just take a pill that has these phytochemicals? No, for example, spinach has lutein that may help delay macular degeneration. When taken in the pill form you are receiving only lutein. Scientists feel that there may be other phytochemicals in the spinach that make lutein work better in delaying blindness.

Where do I find these phytochemicals? Below is a sample of common phytochemicals:

Name of Phytochemical	Food Sources	Possible Health Benefits
Flavonoids 	apples, berries, cherries, citrus fruits, prunes, plums, whole grains, and nuts	May increase HDL (good) cholesterol and help with cancer prevention
Allyl Sulfides 	onions, garlic, chives, and leeks	May lower LDL (bad) cholesterol and help with cancer prevention
Carotenoids (lutein, lycopene, and beta-carotene) 	deeply colored fruits and vegetables (tomatoes, sweet potatoes, spinach)	May strengthen the immune system, protect eyes (macular degeneration), and prevent certain cancers like prostate
Indoles 	broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, turnips, and Brussels sprouts	May help reduce the risk of breast and colon cancer
Isothiocyanates 	broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, turnips, and Brussels sprouts	May inactivate cancer causing materials
Monoterpenes 	citrus fruits and juices (oranges, grapefruits, tangerines, lemon, and lime)	May inactivate cancer causing materials
Isoflavones 	soy food (tofu, soy milk, soy nuts) and legumes (kidney beans, northern beans, and chick peas)	May lower LDL (bad) cholesterol and protect against breast, ovarian, colon, and prostate cancer
Saponins 	potatoes, green vegetables, tomatoes, nuts, soy foods, and legumes	May protect against cancer