

# WHAT'S GOOD TO EAT?!

San Francisco Free Clinic \* Nutrition Newsletter  
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## Nutrition Matters

### SEEDS

#### What are they?

Seeds are the reproductive unit of plants. They contain all of the information necessary to grow another plant, along with some food to help the hatchling along. Technically all grains, beans, and nuts are seeds. In nutrition and culinary terms, the food grouping seeds consists of small hard shelled seeds like sesame, pumpkin, sunflower, flax, hemp, and chia.



#### What nutrients do they contain?

Seeds are nutrient dense foods, often gaining the tag “superfoods.” They have **high protein, complex carbohydrate, fiber, mineral, and fat content.** Because of their density, seeds are high in calories and only need to be eaten in small amount for their health benefits to do their magic. **A serving is ¼ cup or 1 Tablespoon ground.** Most of us consume the oil from seeds, but to get the full nutritional benefits, eat them in the whole state.

#### Some nutritional highlights from the seed group:

- Sunflower are the richest source of vitamin E.
- Seeds are included in the “protein foods” category of the Healthy Plate; ounce for ounce, providing as much protein as meat.
- Chia, hemp and flaxseeds seeds are high in omega-3 fatty acids
- Flax contain 100x more lignans than other plant foods. See below for the health benefits of lignans.
- Hemp is the only seed that contains all the amino acids we need and is therefore categorized as a complete protein.

#### Health benefits of seeds

According to the Global Burden of Disease Study, **inadequate intake of nuts and seeds is the third leading cause of nutrition-related death and disease** — higher even than processed meat consumption.

As with all things nutritional, variety is key. While foods are grouped according to common nutrient composition, they vary in the many hundreds of chemical compounds that can have an impact on human health. Consistent scientific evidence points to the importance of nutrients working in concert with each other. **Therefore the health benefits are maximized with a varied diet.**

**Come visit the clinic's dietitian! Available to clinic patients on Tuesdays. Call 415-750-9894.**

continued on  
the next page



## Health Benefits of Seeds (cont'd)

- **Flaxseeds** have many promising studies showing their benefit in maintaining **healthy blood pressure** and reducing the risk of certain **cancers**. They therefore make it onto Dr Michael Greger's ten foods to eat everyday (along with vegetables, fruits, beans, berries, cruciferous veggies, greens, nuts, spices, and whole grains).
- The lignans in flax dampen the effects of estrogen and have been linked to decreased risk for **breast and prostate cancer** and may help reduce breast and prostate cancer tumor growth.
- Several studies on **pumpkin and sunflower** indicate a similar protection against breast cancer.

## Ways To Eat More Seeds

- Toss them **raw** or **toasted** onto salads, hot or cold breakfast cereals, soups and almost any hot meal for extra crunch and flavor.
- Buy them in "butter" form like peanut butter, or make your own with a high speed blender.



- Bake them into muffins and cookies.

- Make sure to grind flaxseeds before eating, or buy ground flax.

Ground flax will keep for several months at room temperature.

## What's Fresh?

*Tomatoes have burst onto the scene at the markets lately delighting with their many colors and shapes. As with all produce, bright colors indicate high levels of nutrients, and tomatoes contain multitudes: antioxidants, phytochemicals, vitamins, minerals, complex carbohydrates and fiber. Not surprisingly, tomatoes have many health benefits, especially protective of the heart. So while they are at their peak flavor, enjoy tomatoes every day.*



### ———— SIMPLE TOMATO SAUCE ————

- Heat 2 Tablespoons olive oil in a skillet over medium heat.
- Add 2 cloves sliced garlic, a pinch of both salt and black pepper, 1/2 cup chopped fresh basil, and 2 chopped pounds of any type of tomato – cherry, heirloom, grape, roma.
- Simmer slowly for 10 minutes until the tomatoes break down and the sauce thickens.
- Toss with your favorite vegetable (cooked or raw), add to any cooked grain, or use as a nice base for simmering cooked or canned beans.

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