

BOOST YOUR BEANS

Learning to make legumes the feature of at least four of your main meals each week could be one of the simplest dietary strategies to help you reap major health rewards.

Legumes include all fresh and dried beans, peas, lentils and peanuts. They are a high protein food that can easily be used to replace some or all of the meat in your diet. Legumes are also rich in disease fighting nutrients; and research has shown that they are more strongly linked with longevity than any other food group.

why eat more?

Newly published research in the *Archives of Internal Medicine* confirms that, for controlling diabetes, beans are an even better source of carbohydrates than wholegrains. So if you're trying to lose weight, beans are the ideal protein, because they lower insulin resistance. And, unlike red meat, rather than increasing the risk of heart disease, they actively work to lower it.

Beans also have significant fibre and resistant starch, and their phytonutrient contents are thought to contribute to their anti-cancer properties. A research project called the "Adventist Health Study-2" found that eating legumes at least three times a week and brown rice once a week reduces

the risk of colon polyps—the precursors of colon cancer.

Finally, making beans a regular part of your weekly menu has been shown to reduce inflammatory markers in the body and lower cholesterol and blood pressure.

suggestions for preparing beans

- ▶ To speed up the cooking process, pre-soak beans overnight in plenty of water. This will also reduce flatulence, and so will using asafoetida for seasoning or a strip of kombu during cooking (look them up on Wikipedia).
- ▶ Cook beans in larger quantities and freeze them in small batches. Three cups is about right for a recipe that serves four people. This will make it possible to have several kinds readily available.
- ▶ Use beans to make everything from dips and salads to curries, stews, burgers, hearty soups and even cakes and biscuits!



Nutritionist Sue Radd is the award-winning author of *The Breakfast Book* and co-author of *Eat To Live*, internationally acclaimed for showing how savvy eating can combat cancer and heart disease and improve well-being. See www.sueradd.com for more nutrition information.

