



# food matters

WITH CONSULTANT NUTRITIONIST SUE RADD

## legumes for longevity

A high-legume intake is the greatest dietary predictor of longevity, according to new research published in the *Asia-Pacific Journal of Clinical Nutrition*.

For every 20-gram increase in daily legume intake, researchers found an 8 per cent reduction in risk of death when they examined the diets of long-lived elderly people from Japan, Sweden, Greece and Australia. No other food group was so strongly predictive of survival in older age, although olive oil and fish also seemed helpful. In perspective, you could expect half a cup of cooked beans eaten daily to lower your risk of dying prematurely by around 50 per cent!

### know your beans

Legumes (also known as pulses) are dried beans and peas, which you can buy in the supermarket or health food store. They usually require soaking before cooking and include kidney beans, baked beans, soybeans and borlotti beans. Legumes have long been associated with long-lived food cultures such as the Japanese, who regularly eat soy foods such as tofu, natto and miso, and people from the Mediterranean where lentils, chick-peas and white beans feature.

### nutritional features

Legumes are rich in plant protein, which protects the heart and blood vessels. They also contain slow-acting carbohydrates and are packed with dietary fibre, making them excellent for blood-sugar control. Dried beans are a very good source of many minerals, such as iron and zinc, and are naturally cholesterol free and low in saturated fats.

### 5 ways with beans

1. Use canned chickpeas, tahini, lemon and garlic to make hummus for use on bread instead of butter.
2. Design a dhal based on mung beans, split peas and lentils to serve with rice.
3. Toss canned bean mix with Spanish onions, tomato, basil, balsamic vinegar and olive oil for a simple summer salad.
4. Make a lentil burger and serve with grainy bread and fresh salad.
5. See page 31 for a delicious legume dish. Eating these types of foods may add years to your life!

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

For further information on healthy eating, please contact *Sanitarium Nutrition Service*

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