

EAT BETTER

Registered nutritionist Anita Bean reveals the truth behind the latest food trends

Take the pressure off

If you're among the one in three adults who has high blood pressure, including some of the following foods and drinks in your diet may help to reduce it:

- **BETROOT** contains high levels of nitrates that convert to nitric oxide, which keeps blood vessels elastic. People with high blood pressure who drank 250ml beetroot juice a day experienced a drop in both systolic blood pressure (pressure in the arteries when the heart beats) and diastolic blood pressure (pressure in the arteries between heartbeats), say Queen Mary University researchers.
- **WHEY PROTEIN** In a recent UK study, people who consumed two whey protein drinks a day for eight weeks significantly lowered both their systolic and diastolic blood pressure. Whey is also found naturally in milk.
- **CASHEWS AND ALMONDS** are high in magnesium (a small handful provides 20% of your daily requirements), low levels of which are strongly linked to high blood pressure.
- **SPINACH, CABBAGE AND KALE** are among the best sources of potassium, which helps to balance out the negative



Eat and drink your way to lower blood pressure

effects of salt and lowers your blood pressure.

- **CHERRY JUICE** Northumbria University researchers found people who drank 60ml of cherry concentrate, diluted with water, saw their blood pressure drop by 7% within three hours. This is thought to be due to the high levels of polyphenols (plant compounds) in cherry juice.

SAY CHEESE!

Thought full-fat cheese was a diet no-no? Well, new research suggests that eating cheese – in moderation – won't make you pile on the pounds, and may actually be good for your heart. In a study of 164 people, Danish scientists found that those who ate 80g of regular Cheddar daily (about the size of two matchboxes) had higher levels of helpful high-density lipoprotein (HDL) cholesterol – thought to protect against cardiovascular disease – after 12 weeks than those who ate the same amount of reduced-fat cheese or no cheese at all. Their bad low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol levels and their waist measurements didn't change. The health benefits of cheese are thought to be due (at least in part) to its high calcium content, which binds some of the fat, stopping it from being absorbed.

Cheese could help raise your 'good' cholesterol



GETTING YOUR OMEGA 3s

Omega-3 fats are vital for heart health and brain function, but did you know they can also help with reducing the inflammation and joint stiffness of rheumatoid arthritis, preventing Alzheimer's disease and dementia, and treating depression? The richest source of omega-3 fats is oily fish, but if you're vegetarian or simply don't like fish, then you need to make sure you get your omega 3s elsewhere: seeds



Scoop up the health benefits of flaxseeds

(especially pumpkin, flax and chia), nuts (especially walnuts) and rapeseed oil are all good alternatives. Try to include at least one tablespoon of these in your diet each day. Otherwise, you could consider taking a vegetarian omega-3 supplement (made from algae oil (such as Healthspan Veg-Omega 3, £17.95 for 60 capsules) or shiflower oil (such as Vertese Ahiflower Oil, £12.99 for 30 capsules), which both contain high levels of omega-3 fats. □

SMALL CHANGES, BIG DIFFERENCE

Boost your willpower by knowing how long it would take to walk off your favourite soup

| | | | |
|--|---------|--|-----------|
| • 1/2 pot (200ml) New Covent Garden Spicing Souper Greens | 108 cal | | 1.4 miles |
| • 1/2 can (200ml) Heinz Cream Of Tomato | 102 cal | | 1.3 miles |
| • 1/2 pot (200ml) Soupology Ancient Grains | 168 cal | | 2.1 miles |
| • 1/2 pot (200ml) Gariboni Mexican Super Bean And Sweet Potato | 137 cal | | 1.7 miles |
| • 1/2 pot (200ml) Tesco Chicken And Sweetcorn Soup | 175 cal | | 2.2 miles |
| • 1/2 pot (200ml) Marks & Spencer Spicy Red Lentil And Tomato | 150 cal | | 1.9 miles |