

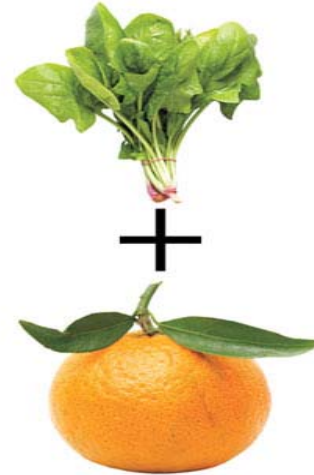
7 Super-Powered Food Pairings

Try these smart combinations to boost your nutrient quotient

By Joy Bauer, RD

peanut butter and strawberry

It's not exactly a news flash that milk can give you strong bones and carrots help sharpen your eyesight. But what you may not know is that you can get more disease-fighting bang by eating certain foods together. Think Simon and Garfunkel, Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers—one's good, but together they're even better. Here, seven power couples.



1. Calcium + Inulin = Healthy Tummy, Strong Bones

If you've ever had a bout of tummy trouble, you should know about inulin (a type of fiber), which helps balance the levels of "good" bacteria in your digestive system. Inulin also benefits your bones by enhancing calcium absorption. You're most likely to run across it as a fiber supplement (Fibersure) or added to foods like yogurt (Yo-Plus, Activia Fiber), but there are a few good natural food options. *Photo: Getty Images; Shutterstock*

Good Sources of Calcium: Milk, yogurt, cheese (all kinds), broccoli, kale, canned-with-bones salmon and sardines, tofu made with calcium chloride or calcium sulfate, almonds, fortified orange juice; fortified soy, rice or almond milk

Good Sources of Inulin: Artichokes, dandelion greens, onions, garlic, leeks, chicory, bananas, whole-wheat flour, asparagus

Combo Ideas

- Bananas in cereal with skim milk
- Grilled asparagus with shaved Parmesan



2. Calcium + Vitamin D = Strong Bones

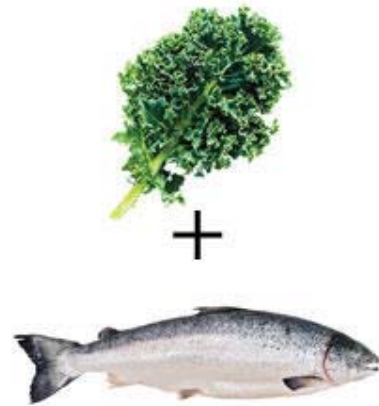
Ever wonder why milk is D-fortified? Your body needs high enough levels of D to absorb bone-building calcium. *Photo: Shutterstock*

Good Sources of Calcium: Kale, broccoli, milk, yogurt, cheese, fortified orange juice; fortified soy, rice or almond milk

Good Sources of Vitamin D: Salmon, sardines, canned light tuna, herring, egg yolks; fortified soy, rice, almond or cow's milk

Combo Ideas

- Grilled salmon with sautéed kale
- Broccoli-cheese omelet
- Tuna melt with lowfat cheese on whole-grain bread



3. Vitamin E + Vitamin C = Sharp Vision

Want to keep your eyesight sharp? Pump up the E, which may help prevent macular degeneration (a major cause of blindness), and combine it with C, which turns vitamin E into the "ready to fight" form that your body can use best. *Photo: Shutterstock*

Good Sources of Vitamin E: Almonds (and almond butter), peanuts (and peanut butter), wheat germ, sunflower seeds, soybeans

Good Sources of Vitamin C: Citrus fruits, kiwi, guava, bell peppers, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, tomatoes, strawberries, potatoes

Combo Ideas

- Peanut butter and sliced strawberries (on a sandwich or toast)
- Salad with mandarin oranges and toasted slivered almonds



4. Iron + Vitamin C = More Energy



Banish that “I’m so tired” feeling by making sure you’re getting enough iron, which helps carry oxygen to your muscles, brain and throughout your body. A potent disease fighter in its own right, vitamin C helps keep your gums, heart and skin healthy, and helps your cells absorb more iron. You can find iron in plant-based foods (fruits, veggies, beans) and animal-based foods (red meat, chicken, eggs). But it’s harder for your body to absorb iron from the plant-based ones, which is why pairing them with C is a smart move. *Photo: Shutterstock*

Plant-based Iron Sources: Spinach, oatmeal, tofu, wheat germ, quinoa, starchy beans (including black, pinto, soy, fava,

chickpeas)

Good Sources of Vitamin C: Citrus fruits, kiwi, guava, strawberries, tomatoes, bell peppers, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, potatoes

Combo Ideas

- Spinach salad with orange slices
- Bean burrito with salsa
- Oatmeal with strawberries

5. Vitamin K + Fat = Healthy Heart and Bones

Fat is good—or at least it can be, if you eat the right type. The “good” fats (mono- and polyunsaturated, including omega-3s) have major health benefits like lowering cholesterol, and your body can’t absorb certain vitamins—including vitamin K, which is crucial for building bone and blood clotting—without fat.

Photo: Shutterstock

Good Sources of Vitamin K: Kale, spinach, Swiss chard, turnip greens, broccoli, cabbage, Brussels sprouts

Good Sources of Fat: Nuts—any kind, including walnuts, almonds, peanuts, cashews; oils including olive, almond, canola, flaxseed, hazelnut, toasted sesame, avocado



Combo Ideas

- Swiss chard, spinach or broccoli sautéed in olive oil
- Roasted Brussels sprouts with slivered almonds

6. Beta-Carotene/Vitamin A + Fat = Glowing Skin

Move over, antiaging creams: Beta-carotene—which needs fat for absorption and is turned into vitamin A in your body—helps give your skin a youthful glow. Vitamin A also plays a vital role in a healthy immune and reproductive system. But it needs the good fat to help your body absorb it. *Photo: Shutterstock; Getty Images*

Good Sources of Beta-Carotene: Carrots, apricots, cantaloupe, sweet potato, papaya, kale, spinach

Good Sources of Fat: Nuts—any kind, including walnuts, almonds, peanuts; oils including olive, almond, canola, flaxseed, toasted sesame, avocado

Combo Ideas

- Oven-roasted sweet potato fries made with olive or canola oil
- Carrots dipped in guacamole or hummus (made with sesame-based tahini and/or olive oil)
- Trail mix made with dried apricots, dried papaya, almonds and walnuts



7. Zinc + Sulphur Compounds = Strong Immune System

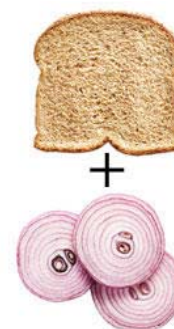
Attention onion and garlic lovers! These two pungent plants do more than add flavor to foods. Turns out their sulfur compounds help boost absorption of the zinc that's found in whole-grain foods (important for immunity and wound healing). *Photo: Antonis Achilleos/Woman's Day; Shutterstock*

Good Sources of Zinc: All whole grains, including brown rice and whole-grain breads; legumes

Good Sources of Sulfur Compounds: Onions, garlic

Combo Ideas

- Brown (or wild) rice with caramelized onions
- Whole-wheat bagel topped with light cream cheese and sliced onion



Joy Bauer, RD, is the nutrition expert for the TODAY show and bestselling author of Joy Bauer's Food Cures. For more info, go to JoyBauer.com.