

What's Your Food IQ?

If you are what you eat, then it pays to know as much as you can about nutrition.



Michele Meyer

1. Which of the following items offered on a typical deli menu is lowest in fat?

- a.) corned beef on rye
- b.) pastrami on rye
- c.) turkey on wheat
- d.) ham on wheat
- e.) hot dog and bun

Answer: c. At 4 fat grams and 250 calories (assuming a 3-ounce portion of meat, two standard slices of bread, and no condiments), the turkey on wheat is the best choice. But ham's a close second with 7 fat grams and 260 calories. The rest shake out as follows: hot dog (all-beef, white bun), 15.3 fat grams, 266 calories; pastrami, 27 fat grams and 420 calories; and corned beef, 19 fat grams and 340

calories. Add a tablespoon of regular mayonnaise, and you've got another 100 calories and 11 fat grams; light mayo is 25 calories and 1 fat gram per tablespoon; and a tablespoon of mustard is 5 calories and 0.2 fat grams.

2. Which of the following represents one serving from the bread and grain group?

- a.) a restaurant-size baked potato
- b.) one bagel
- c.) a 3/4-cup bowl of cornflakes
- d.) a typical side dish of rice
- e.) a dinner plate of pasta

Answer: c. It's easier than you might think to achieve the six to 11 servings of whole grains per day that form the base of the USDA Food Guide Pyramid. The bowl of cornflakes is the only single serving here. A baked potato from a typical restaurant would be three servings; most bagels are at least two servings (and often more); a side dish of rice would be two (1/3 cup is the standard size); and pasta, four (most dinner plates hold 2 cups; a half-cup is one serving). Note: Cereals are tricky -- a single serving of a puffed cereal, such as Rice Krispies, would amount to more than 3/4 cup; a denser cereal, such as low-fat granola, would be less. Check your cereal box for exact amounts.

3. Which of these foods packs the biggest antioxidant punch?

- a.) a bowl of Total cereal
- b.) carrots
- c.) blueberries
- d.) oranges

Answer: c. You could call the tiny blueberry a superfood, with the highest antioxidant power of any fruit. Two-thirds of a cup boasts the antioxidant capacity of 60 times the Recommended Daily Allowance of vitamin E and 21 times the RDA of vitamin C. Blueberries also contain anthocyanins, chemicals that have cardiovascular as well as antioxidant benefits. These substances can discourage blood clots from forming and possibly ward off heart attacks, says Jim Joseph, Ph.D., chief of the neuroscience laboratory at the Jean Mayer USDA Human Nutrition Research Center on Aging at Tufts University in Boston. In addition, the antioxidants in blueberries may improve night vision and possibly slow macular degeneration (a condition that can lead to blindness with age), he says. And Joseph's latest studies suggest the fruits may also protect against age-related deterioration of the brain, thus preserving memory.

4. Which mineral or vitamin is beneficial against osteoporosis, colon cancer, and kidney stones?

- a.) vitamin A
- b.) salt
- c.) vitamin E
- d.) calcium

Answer: d. Calcium fights all these diseases. Taking 1,500 milligrams of calcium cut the recurrence of precancerous colon polyps by 20% in a preliminary study at Dartmouth Medical School. Calcium, believes Columbia University researcher Peter Holt, M.D., binds with some fats, whisking them out of the body before they can irritate the colon. The mineral may also curb the risk of one type of kidney stone by neutralizing oxalate, a compound in fruits, vegetables, and legumes that can trigger them. (If you are at risk for kidney stones, check with your doctor, though -- some people who have them benefit instead from low-calcium diets.)

By the way, 1 cup of fat-free fruit yogurt contains 320 milligrams of calcium, versus 300 milligrams in a glass of milk or orange juice, and only 150 milligrams in a cup of cottage cheese. Women need to consume 1,000 milligrams of calcium daily (1,200 milligrams after age 50) to help protect against osteoporosis, according to the National Academy of Sciences.

5. Which is best for your health?

- a.) butter
- b.) stick margarine
- c.) corn oil
- d.) olive oil
- e) all of the above

Answers: c and d. By using polyunsaturated fats such as corn oil and monounsaturated fats such as olive oil instead of butter and stick margarine, you can lower your LDL (bad) cholesterol. Too much of the saturated fat in butter and trans fatty acids in stick margarine is known to raise your risk of heart disease. Indeed, a Harvard study of more than 80,000 nurses showed that for every 5% increase in calories from polyunsaturated fat, risk of heart disease fell about 40%, and for each 5% hike in monounsaturated fat, risk of heart disease dropped 20%. In contrast, increasing calories from saturated fat by 5% spurred a rise in risk of 17%, and for each 2% increase in trans fats, heart-disease risk jumped 93%. Still, all fats should be consumed in moderation -- that is, they should comprise less than 30% of your total calories over the course of a day, with less than a third of that saturated.

6. Which has the most fiber?

- a.) a slice of whole-wheat bread
- b.) a cup of strawberries
- c.) a cucumber
- d.) two rice cakes

Answer: b. A cup of strawberries has 4 grams of fiber, double the fiber in the slice of bread or in a cucumber, and way more than the rice cakes, which combined only have half a gram at most, says Cathy Kapica, Ph.D., R.D., assistant professor of nutrition and clinical dietetics at Chicago Medical School. Other high-fiber winners include a pear, a cup of blueberries, and a medium-sized baked potato. Skins on, all have 4 grams. Most people consume on average about 11 grams of fiber daily -- about half the total most experts suggest.

7. Eating which food may allow you to stop taking estrogen-replacement therapy after menopause?

- a.) tofu
- b.) chocolate
- c.) milk
- d.) none of the above

Answer: d. Some studies suggest that soy foods such as tofu can ease menopausal hot flashes and night sweats by up to 40%. But don't throw away your hormone pills just yet. "No studies demonstrate conclusively that soy reduces the need for ERT," says Clare M. Hasler, Ph.D., executive director of the Functional Foods for Health program at the University of Illinois. However, research does suggest that isoflavones -- plant estrogens in soy foods -- may help lower cholesterol and strengthen bones. Indeed, a University of Illinois study of 66 postmenopausal women who consumed soy isoflavones equal to those found in a cup of soy milk, a half-cup of tofu, a scoop of soy-protein powder, or a handful of roasted soybeans each day saw a 2% gain in spinal bone mass within six months.

8. Eight ounces of fish is the minimum you need to satisfy your daily protein quota.

True or False

Answer: False. You only need 6 ounces of fish -- equivalent in size to two decks of cards, much less than you'd get in a typical restaurant portion. "Really, 40 grams of protein is all you need," says Anne Dubner, M.A., R.D., a Houston-based

spokesperson for the American Dietetic Association. That's about the amount in 5 ounces of broiled lean ground beef or roasted pork tenderloin, and 4.5 ounces of roasted chicken without the skin. "Even if you're trying to build muscle or lose weight, you don't need extra protein," she says. "Remember: Excess calories from protein are stored as fat, just like excess calories from any other source."

Source: <http://www.cookinglight.com/cooking/hl/nutrition/article/0,13803,228304,00.html> (11.05.07)