



Eat More Legumes

CHALLENGE
Eat more
legumes, beans,
lentils, and
peas.

Requirements to complete this HEALTH CHALLENGE™

1. Keep a written record of the days you eat legumes (beans, lentils, peas, garbanzos).
2. Read "Eat More Legumes"
3. To complete the Challenge, eat a serving of legumes on at least 3 days a week this month.
4. Keep a record of your completed Challenge in case your organization requires documentation.



What in the world is a legume?

- A. A universal statement that means "let go of me" used during an altercation with another person where physical contact takes place.
- B. The French word for chewing gum.
- C. A plant-based food that includes beans, lentils, and peas.

The right answer is C. A legume, or *leguminosae*, is the edible seed that grows in pods such as snow peas, kidney beans, and green lentils. And they're delicious. Just think about eating salmon seasoned with garlic complimented with freshly steamed snow peas. Or your favorite black bean dip with fresh red pepper and celery sticks. Or savory lentil and mushroom soup. Or refreshing cold soymilk on your morning cereal. Yum!

In addition to the "yum" factor, legumes are loaded with vitamins and nutrients proven to help prevent disease and improve your health. It is true that if you don't eat legumes regularly, you'll find some may give you gas. Every bean joke you've ever heard might apply. The trade-off will still be worth it.

If you're already eating legumes daily, or a few times a week, you're doing great. But if legumes don't make it to your mouth that often, it might help if you knew how good they are for you. Legumes can:

Cut Your Risk for Cancer

Eating more legumes will help you reduce your risk for certain types of cancer. A recent study in the *Journal of the National Black Nurses Association* showed that people who regularly ate peas, beans, soy, lentils, and garbanzos reduced their risk of colon cancer by 81 percent. This was compared to those who rarely ate legumes. In another study, people who ate soybeans regularly were 46 percent less likely to develop stomach cancer than those who rarely ate soybeans. A bowl of boiled beans might not be your first choice for a delectable dish. But home-made black bean burritos might be.

Feast on Fiber for Better Health

Legumes contain the highest amount of fiber of any food group. High fiber foods can help:

- ✓ lower cholesterol levels
- ✓ release glucose into the blood
- ✓ lower your risk for diabetes and heart disease
- ✓ promote a healthy bowel
- ✓ satisfy the feeling of being hungry, which can help you maintain your weight

Legumes also contain high levels of folic acid and other B vitamins, which are linked to preventing colon cancer. If you are looking for an eating plan that's high in fiber, try the Dash Diet, the Full Plate Diet, or the Mediterranean Diet. These are based on eating more legumes, fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts, poultry, and fish. Adult women should try to eat 25 grams of dietary fiber per day. Men should aim for 38 grams per day.

Try These
Tasty Legume
Recipes
[tinyurl.com/
7y7wxxd](http://tinyurl.com/7y7wxxd)

Take the Gas Out of Legumes

- Cook legumes thoroughly. Pressure-cooking is best.
- Add Beano® to your legumes right before you eat them. Beano® is a natural enzyme that speeds up digestion and helps prevent excess gas.
- Give yourself some time. Start with tofu and soymilk. Your body will eventually adapt to eating more legumes.



Compare the Fiber Content

Food	Serving size	Fiber (g)
Black beans, cooked	1 cup	13.9
Kidney beans, cooked	1 cup	11.6
Lentils, cooked	1 cup	13.6
Lima beans, cooked	1 cup	8.6
Apple	1 medium	5.0
Blueberries	1 cup	4.2

Legumes contain more healthy fiber than any other food group.

Source: USDA



Support Your Heart with Antioxidants

Foods that are high in antioxidants strengthen your immune system and help slow the aging process. Antioxidants help prevent plaque build-up on artery walls. Without this nutrient, your risk is increased for cancer, heart disease, and aged-related diseases like Alzheimer's and Parkinson's. Blueberries and strawberries probably get the most attention for being a rich source of antioxidants. But legumes contain twice the amount of antioxidants as these berries. Red beans top the list. They contain more antioxidants than any fruit, vegetable, legume, or whole grain.

Power Up With Protein

You need protein to support the growth and repair of your muscles, skin, hair, and bones, and other functions. Legumes can fit the bill. An average serving of soybeans contains just as much healthy protein as an egg and almost as much protein as red meat, but without high levels of fat and artery-clogging cholesterol. Soybeans contain more protein than any other legume. Once used primarily in Asian cuisine, soybeans are now found in common food products such as veggie patties, soy milk, and tofu. Other protein-rich legumes include pinto beans, black beans, and garbanzo beans. Adults should eat at least 46 to 56 grams of protein per day.

What About Peanuts?

Peanuts are part of the legume family. From the peanut plant, small pods grow underground with two or more edible seeds inside. In other words, they're not really a nut. (True nuts like walnuts, almonds, and pecans, grow on trees and produce a shell with a single nut inside.) Peanuts are a good source of protein and fiber like other legumes, and are high in unsaturated fat making them protective against heart disease. But they are also higher in calories than "real" nuts.



It's Time for Some Bean Counting

How often do you eat legumes? Daily, a few times a week, never? Legumes are a healthy alternative to red meat, fast food, and other high saturated-fat, high-calorie foods. You can prepare your own legumes or buy them canned. (If you buy canned legumes, always rinse them before serving). Here are some ways you can eat more legumes:

Breakfast

- Add almonds to yogurt or cereal.
- Use soymilk to make pancakes or waffles.
- Add black beans to a breakfast burrito.



Lunch

- Order the bean soup on the menu, or bring your own.
- Try a soy burger on a whole-wheat bun with pickles, tomatoes, and lettuce.
- Make a peanut butter sandwich.



Dinner

- Make a spicy bean chili.
- Try an entrée made with tofu at a restaurant.
- Serve peas, green beans, or baby lima beans on the side.



Snack

- Try roasted soy nuts.
- Eat trail mix with peanuts.
- Put some hummus dip on whole-wheat crackers.

Challenge Yourself To:

- Replace red meat at one meal with legumes.
- Pick an easy legume recipe from a cookbook or website, and prepare it.
- Make your own hummus from garbanzo beans.
- Ask your Facebook friends for tasty legume recipes.
- Buy canned or dry beans each time you go to the store.
- Eat at least 3 servings of legumes per week. If you already eat that many, eat legumes 5 times a week or daily.

Let's Hear It For Legumes

- Excellent source of protein. Supports growth and development.
- High in fiber. Aids in bowel health and weight loss.
- Low in saturated fat. Helps limit weight gain.
- High in folic acid. Needed for healthy blood cells.
- Rich in antioxidants. Helps prevent plaque build-up in arteries.
- Low glycemic index. Helps prevent diabetes.

Source: Harvard School of Public Health

When you realize all the benefits of legumes, it's okay to make some noise, occasionally. Legumes really are a superfood loaded with vitamins and nutrients to keep you healthy.

Sources:

Journal of the National Black Nurses' Association 2006;17(2):6-12

Cancer Epidemiology Biomarkers and Prevention 2010. 19(5); 1292-1300.

Journal of Nutrition. 2006. 136(7):1896-1903.

U.S. Department of Agriculture

Harvard School of Public Health

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

List of Legumes

- Adzuki beans
- Black beans
- Black-eyed peas
- Fava beans
- Garbanzo beans (Chick peas)
- Green beans
- Kidney beans
- Lentils
- Lima beans
- Mung beans
- Peanuts
- Pinto beans
- Red beans
- Snap peas
- Snow peas
- Soybeans (Edamame)
- Split peas
- White beans (Navy beans)



Adzuki beans



Black-eyed peas



Fava beans



Chick peas



Mung beans



Snap peas



Snow peas



Soybeans (Edamame)





Eat More Legumes

Instructions

1. Post this calendar where you will see it daily (bathroom, kitchen, bedroom, etc.).
2. Record the number of days you ate more legumes, beans, lentils, and peas.
3. At the end of the month, total the number of days you ate more legumes. You must eat a serving of legumes on at least 3 days a week during the month to complete the Challenge. Then keep up this practice for a lifetime of best health!
4. Keep this record for evidence of completion.

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MONTH: _____							HC = Health Challenge™ ex. min. = exercise minutes
SUN.	MON.	TUE.	WED.	THU.	FRI.	SAT.	Weight & weekly summary
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_____ Number of days this month I ate legumes, beans, lentils, or peas

_____ Number of days this month I got 30+ minutes of physical activity such as brisk walking or biking

Other wellness projects completed this month:

Name _____ Date _____

