



MORE ONLINE
Visit torontosun.com/good
for healthy snack ideas.

Food facts

'Bad' foods that are good for you



Avocado

CRIME: High in fat — about 30 grams for a medium-sized avocado.

THE GOOD NEWS: Although higher in fat and calories than its fruit and vegetable counterparts, avocados provide great nutritional bang for your buck, says MacGregor. They are a good source of heart-healthy fat, potassium, fibre, folate, vitamin C and vitamin K. This fruit not only contains the healthy monosaturated kind of fat, which is great for your hair and skin, but can also help increase good cholesterol. Moderation is key to preventing weight gain.



JOANNE
RICHARD
Life

Some foods are just plain misunderstood.

Do you avoid nuts because they're super fattening? Turn up your nose at red meat because it'll clog your arteries? Or avoid eggs because of the cholesterol?

They have a bad reputation, but don't count them out, says Erin MacGregor, a registered

dietitian and professional home economist.

These unhealthy foods may be high in calories, fat and/or cholesterol, but they're also high in nutritional benefits and will likely leave you satiated for longer periods of time than some lower-fat counterparts.

With all the hoopla about eating healthy, don't be fooled by the myths out there. Some bad foods are actually good for you when eaten in moderation:

✉ joanne.richard@sunmedia.ca

📧 @joannerichard_



Eggs

CRIME: Egg yolks are high in cholesterol — they'll clog your arteries and will increase your risk of a heart attack.

THE GOOD NEWS: Eggs have long been vilified for their cholesterol count but no need to avoid eggs or egg yolks. Healthy adults can get cracking and enjoy the heart-healthy benefits of the lutein found in egg yolks. "Eating the whole egg is vital," says MacGregor. "An egg yolk contains 100% of an egg's essential fatty acids along with the lion's share of vitamins and minerals. The egg white is a good source of complete protein, meaning it contains all of the essential amino acids."



Cheese

CRIME: This food of confusion is calorically dense and has a high fat content.

THE GOOD NEWS: Unprocessed cheese is an excellent source of calcium, which is great for teeth and bones, and a good source of complete protein. Enjoy in moderation, says MacGregor, who recommends a serving size of about one ounce or 28 grams. Go for imported grass-fed cheese, and hard cheeses are generally healthier than soft.



Beef

CRIME: Lots of people have a beef with this misunderstood food because beef has long been associated with the development of cardiovascular disease (CVD) because of its saturated fat and dietary cholesterol.

THE GOOD NEWS: Sticking to lean cuts with little marbling and the recommended serving size will not wreak havoc with your health. According to MacGregor, "a large scale review of red meat consumption on CVD, stroke and diabetes has more recently shown that processed red meat — deli meat — is the real concern. A three-ounce serving of unprocessed beef is an excellent source of protein, B vitamins and a good source of iron."



Nuts

CRIME: Cashews, almonds, walnuts and peanuts pack a lot of fat and overindulgence can lead to weight gain.

THE GOOD NEWS: Sure, guilty as charged they are loaded with fat and calories, but all heart-healthy fats. Each variety carries its own set of nutritional benefits, says MacGregor. Keep it simple and stick with raw, unseasoned options to avoid added fat, sugar and salt. Be mindful of portion sizes and aim for a small handful or about a quarter cup per day.



Potatoes

CRIME: Blamed for increasing blood glucose levels, excess weight and Type 2 diabetes, and vilified for zero nutrition, especially when commercially prepared as potato chips and French fries.

THE GOOD NEWS: Spuds are not a dud! Try roasting, steaming or grilling whole potatoes to take advantage of their benefits, which include being an excellent source of potassium and vitamin C, says MacGregor. Just hold the butter and sour cream!



Coffee

CRIME: Caffeine is bad for you — it makes you jittery, and may possibly interfere with having a restful night.

THE GOOD NEWS: While research around coffee has wavered over the years, what is clear is that it's a major source of antioxidants in the North American diet, says MacGregor. "Antioxidants combat the free radicals in our bodies which over time lead to the development of chronic disease." Studies have shown that drinking coffee may protect against Parkinson's disease, Type 2 diabetes, liver disease and death related to cardiovascular disease, she adds.