

Introduction

Living Medicine shows how we can feel better, manage long-term conditions and treat minor ailments with foods, herbs and simple lifestyle changes. Discovering the wonderful ways plants support our bodies reveals a new world in which we are part of, and can work with, nature. Understanding how to use food remedies gives us control and helps us feel good. We update this global cultural knowledge for today's safe use and to pass on to family and friends.



Self Care starts with awareness



Try this 3 minute body scan daily: sit in a chair, feet flat on the floor, hands relaxed, close your eyes and breathe gently. Notice how your feet feel - warm, cold, any pain? Moving up, focus a few seconds on each area - legs, hips, bottom, belly, chest, arms, hands, head and face – any discomfort,

hunger, stress, emotion? The body will tell us what it needs if we listen. And it reduces stress, calms our busy minds, helps us concentrate and pay attention to the present.

Self Care Lifestyle

Just the first four of these 10 steps can be life-changing. Each has multiple effects on us: resilience to infection, weight, energy, mood and stress control and reduced inflammation to better manage long-term conditions.

1. Be aware of your body, listen to it and identify early its needs and remedies
2. Eat wholefood breakfast and/or lunch to keep you full through the day, and a smaller meal/plate if possible in the evenings when our digestive function is lower
3. Eat more vegetables than fruits and always with their edible skins, pith and seeds: daily handful beans, nuts, seeds, their oils, some herbs/spices and optional fish especially oily 2x/wk and a little meat - eat in company for better digestion!
4. Sleep often by 10/11pm for 7-8 hours after light evening meal for best body/mind repair
5. Express feelings, love and be loved, and do more of what gives you pleasure
6. Be active outdoors – pant a little every day! - to oxygenate and massage our hard-working organs, get vitamin D from daylight - and rest too.
7. Walk near trees and plants to breathe in their immune-supporting chemicals and microbes – and their healing beauty
8. Keep alcohol/drugs to a safe level – e.g. small glass red wine every other day
9. Have a sense of control, a purpose, feel gratitude and contribute to others
10. Be kind to yourself – even one small change can make a difference

Self Care Foods

Fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds All whole unprocessed plant foods contain fuel, fibre, minerals and vitamins, and also phytonutrients as their defence against infection. These provide our natural medicine. We're designed to slowly process whole foods, raw or lightly cooked, with all their components for our immune systems. Refined products like white/brown bread, pastries or sugary foods lack vital fibre and nutrients, so raise our blood sugar and insulin too fast. This is stressful and inflammatory, encouraging disease, so see these as treats best eaten after main dishes.

Herbs, spices and wild foods These are more concentrated in medicinal compounds than fruit and vegetables. Each phytonutrient has a specific action in us - eg on our liver or circulation - and combine to manage our immune and inflammatory responses. Include herbs and spices daily to support resilience.

Key foods

Whole foods, unrefined or wild, with fibre and medicine intact



Skins, pith, seeds of vegetables and fruits



Actions on body

Fibre slows down rise in blood sugar and insulin – fundamental to preventing/managing infection, inflammation and chronic diseases including cancer. Keeps us feeling full, improves energy, sleep, concentration and mood.

Rich in plant's defence chemicals/phytonutrients like tannins, essential oils, colourful flavonoid pigments acting as antimicrobial or anti-inflammatory in us. Fibre binds to excrete excess hormones.

Key foods	Actions on body
Skins, pith, seeds <i>continued</i>	Microbes on the skins feed our gut microbiome and immunity.
Oatmeal best, oatflakes more processed 	Slow-release all-round food with protein, oils and fibre-rich carbs to sustain energy and buffer stress. Anti-inflammatory EFA/essential fatty acid oils for nerves, brain, mood, skin. Prebiotic betaglucan gels feed gut microbes for immunity.
Flax/linseeds, chia seeds 	EFA's support mood and skin. Gel soothes gut for easier bowel function and feeds gut microbes. Phytoestrogens may lower excess oestrogen in PMT, menopause and cancer.
Nuts, seeds, their oils 	Zinc (high in pumpkin), calcium and other minerals, EFA oils for skin, mood, nerves, brain and reducing inflammation.
Garlic	Antimicrobial; warming for heart/circulation, infection
Ginger	Warming, antispasmodic circulatory to gut, joints, heart
Turmeric	Liver metabolism, joint support, anti-inflammatory
Cinnamon	Warming antimicrobial for gut; may lower blood sugar

Self Care Basic breakfast and lunch

Breakfast with weight-managing, super-nutritious fibre-rich oats, fruit, nuts, seeds to provide energy, nutrients and medicine right through the morning - 3 ways. Then eat a colourful wholefood lunch full of variety and tastes for another 4 hours of good energy and nutrients.

3-minute smoothie

400ml portion for one



Blend fruit and yogurt:

- 2-3 tbs plain yogurt (not 0% fat), or oat/coconut/nut milk, kefir or just water
- 1/2 banana
- 1/3-1/2 apple with skin/core/pips
- 1/3-1/2 pear with skin/core/pips
- Handful mixed berries *frozen vit C rich*
- +/- another fruit (eg plum, cherries, slice mango, 1/4 pomegranate with white pith, a prune or date for sweetness and/or ginger for heat.

Then fold in oat/nut/seed mix

- 2 tbs medium/pinhead oatmeal (or flakes)
- 1 heaped tbs sunflower+pumpkin seeds
- 1 heaped tbs flax/linseeds
- 1 handful mixed nuts including Brazils

Easy hot porridge per person

Mix 1/2 cup medium/pinhead oatmeal (or flakes) with 1-1 1/2 cups water, 1/2-1 tsp cinnamon, a handful of frozen mixed berries, and/or diced apple, plus prune/date for sweetness, pinch salt. Cook gently, covered, stirring occasionally, on very low heat for 10-15+mins, adding more water if needed..

Muesli per person

Soak overnight 2-3 tbs oatmeal (or flakes), 2 tbs seeds, a handful chopped nuts, a handful of frozen mixed berries in water, kefir, yogurt or nut/dairy milk. By morning it's soft and creamy. Add chopped/grated apple or other fruit, more yogurt, milk, cinnamon etc.



Lentil-grain dish makes 4 portions

Combine lentils (or small beans) and grains for fibre, protein and slow release energy base for 4 quick adaptable lunches. Keep in cold fridge for <4 days.

- Lentils: black/Puy/green, or aduki/mung beans
- Grain: eg short-grain brown/basmati/wild black/red rice, barley, spelt, quinoa, millet or amaranth
- 3 garlic cloves skins on, 2 bay leaves, pepper
- Optional some chopped seaweed, chopped mushrooms (pro-immunity), root vegetable

Put 1/2 cup each of the pulse and grain into saucepan with garlic, seaweed, bay leaves. Add approx double the water, cover and simmer very gently (a heat diffuser helps) for approx 35 mins. Check and add more water if needed - all should finally be absorbed. Then, mix in a handful of chopped parsley or coriander. Refrigerate. Serve 3+ tbs of pulses/grains with salad, raw and/or roasted/cooked vegetables, oily fish (tins sardines, mackerel) chicken/meat or egg. Toss with olive oil, cider/balsamic vinegar or lemon juice and eat!

