

# health check



WITH  
**EMMA-CHARLOTTE BROWN**

## Eat TO LIVE longer

Some everyday foods have incredible disease-fighting power, so the key to better health could be in your fridge

### NAUGHTY BUT NICE!

■ They're considered naughty, but both red wine and chocolate are abundant in antioxidants which have been shown to lower the risk of heart disease. So, it's OK to indulge, although moderation is the key.

**T**here are some foods with secret disease-fighting properties that can be found in your kitchen. Eat 'em up to live longer!

■ **BROCCOLI** may be one of our best cancer-fighting foods, as well as preventing stomach ulcers. It contains a chemical called sulforaphane which triggers cancer-blocking agents. **EAT** four to five serves a week.

■ **BRAZIL NUTS** are a rich source of selenium, a trace element essential to a healthy immune system. Selenium works with vitamin E to protect against lung, colorectal and prostate cancer and is a powerful antioxidant that helps maintain a healthy heart. **EAT** up to two nuts a day.

■ **CRANBERRIES** are packed with vitamin C and are used to treat urinary tract infections. Recent research indicates that cranberries are also rich in other antioxidants which help the body fight cancer and heart disease. **DRINK** a glass of juice daily.

■ **CHILLIS** can help dissolve blood clots and may help prevent bronchitis and emphysema. They also increase metabolism (good for those wanting to lose a couple of kilos), and have a high concentration of vitamin C – around two to three times that of citrus fruit. In addition, they're high in fibre, as well as potassium which prevents high blood pressure. **EAT** chilli in meals.

■ **YOGHURT** is full of calcium, vital for healthy teeth and bones. It's also a good source of friendly bacterial cultures known as "probiotics", which aid digestion and help prevent disease. Medical researchers believe yoghurt may help to normalise gut function following a course of antibiotics, help to control diarrhoea, boost

the immune system, and can reduce the likelihood of vaginal infections (thrush).

**EAT** one or two serves daily.

■ **FISH**, especially oily fish, such as salmon, sardines, trout and canned tuna, contains omega-3 fatty acids that guard against cancer and heart disease, lower blood pressure and reduce risk of stroke. Fish is high in protein, low in cholesterol, full of minerals and has been found to lessen the severity of menstrual cramps. **EAT** three to five serves a week.

■ **ONIONS** eaten raw can help prevent a heart attack by boosting "good" cholesterol by up to 30 per cent. But don't despair if you don't like them raw – cooking will still rev up the fibrinolytic system to ward off blood clots and reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease. Onion also helps control blood sugar, kill infection-causing bacteria and may reduce the risk of developing breast, ovarian, colon and lung cancers. **EAT** them daily in meals.

■ **ORANGES** help ward off colds, prevent infection, lower cholesterol, prevent kidney stones, reduce risk of colon cancer and speed recovery from heart attack. Full of vitamins, especially vitamin C, they also help you absorb iron from leafy green vegies – so have a juice with your dinner. **EAT** one or two a day.

■ **LEGUMES** are an excellent source of soluble fibre, which helps lower cholesterol, and also help fight the war against cancer. Including peas, beans and lentils, they're rich in compounds that may help slow the development of cancer cells and high in antioxidants. Studies show eating soy beans may help lower the risk of prostate and breast cancer. **EAT** half a cup of cooked legumes a day.

*Story: Jane Keighley*