

Natural foods fuel the body better than processed

If the saying "You are what you eat" has any validity, it is especially true with athletes.

Those of you who are skiing, hiking, running or biking know that missing a meal just might mean missing a critical turn.



dr. paul collins

Staying properly fueled is a safety issue. But too much food and too little have their downsides, and knowing how to stay well-supplied with a balanced mix of power foods

and repair nutrition is what keeps us coming back for more.

The issue of nutrition fills huge hard drives, but there are some points you can remember when you hit the market.

"Functional foods" are defined as "any healthful food or food ingredient that may provide a health benefit beyond the traditional nutrients it contains."

In other words, they carry more than just calories. They also include vitamins, elements, or other components that help your body not just run but improve.

Functional foods also includes foods that help prevent diseases, much like vitamin C in oranges helps prevent scurvy.



Roger Phillips / Idaho Statesman file

If you regularly snowshoe, run, bike or ski, and even if you don't, you should try to eat as many "functional foods" as you can.

letes especially need dairy products because their skeletal mass is growing.

Yogurt contains yeasts and bacteria needed for bowel func-

Oats are a great source of fiber and are effective in lowering cholesterol and reducing the risk for heart disease.

Soy is one of the better plant

that it may lower blood pressure and cholesterol. Some studies also show that garlic can reduce the risk of stomach and colon cancer. The odor of

vent disease. The fruits also contain folate and fiber. A high-fiber diet can help prevent colon cancer, and there may be other components in citrus fruits that also help.

Cranberries are high in benzoic acid, which can acidify urine and thus help with urinary infections in addition to being a good fluid source. The acid also may inhibit the growth of E. coli.

Tomatoes are found to be high in lycopene, which is called a carotenoid. That is a powerful antioxidant that may help prevent cardiac disease and even prostate cancer.

Broccoli, cabbage, and other "cruciferous" vegetables have been shown to decrease cancer risk. These plants have a high concentration of glucosinolates which may help prevent cancer. They also are a good source of fiber.

When it comes to drinks, tea is getting a lot of attention for its possible anti-cancer properties. Green tea has been found to be rich in polyphenols, which is an antioxidant. The studies are not conclusive on this, but reaching for a glass of tea rather than a soda might do a lot more than just satisfy your thirst.

Wine and grape juice are perhaps the most commonly recommended health fluids. There has been growing evi-

nolic substances included in the grape skins, can help prevent the formation of deposits in the arteries. Since wine has been linked to a higher risk of cancer, it might be prudent to use grape juice to get this effect, rather than a dark red wine.

The detrimental effects of alcohol are well-known. Still, the grape juice and the components of the grape skins seem to be protective for the health of the arteries.

As I said, the literature on this subject of food and disease prevention is huge, and much of the data is not as conclusive as we would like. Still, consuming more naturally occurring food rather than processed is always a good choice. Anything that has been treated to sit for months, nonrefrigerated in a vending machine, is probably not going to have much health benefit, and might even have some health risk.

When you're shopping for food to fuel your body as you head up the hill to ski, consider the options. You are out there for the long term, so choose foods that will last as long as you do.

Paul Collins, M.D. is an orthopedic surgeon specializing in sports medicine at Orthopedic Health Care in Boise. Collins is an avid participant

includes foods that help prevent diseases, much like vitamin C in oranges helps prevent scurvy.

Most food choices have been around for generations, even so we are just now learning how beneficial they are.

Animal sources are not generally considered functional foods because they often are associated with high cholesterol, high caloric content and high fat. Still, there are some animal sources that are worth looking at.

Those fish high in omega-3 fatty acid, like salmon, may have some effect on cardiovascular disease by reducing triglycerides, although the data is mixed. Still, as a source of animal-based calories it may be a better choice than meat.

Dairy products are another source of helpful components, including calcium. Young ath-

letes are growing.

Yogurt contains yeasts and bacteria needed for bowel function. Some of these bacteria may be helpful in lowering cholesterol and reducing the risk of bowel cancer.

Dairy products can provide both a quick and slow-release source of calories that might keep you going for longer than a sugar-laden, but short-term boost from candy.

Plant sources are the best functional foods. They provide calories and a host of vitamins and minerals. They also improve the gastrointestinal function.

Some plants even have nutrients that help reduce the risk of cancer. The nutrients are called phytochemicals.

Many commonly used drugs started as plant-based compounds, such as digitalis.

ing cholesterol and reducing the risk for heart disease.

Soy is one of the better plant sources. It has been shown to help reduce cardiovascular disease, osteoporosis and possibly cancer. Its ability to lower blood lipids comes in at about 25 grams per day.

There are studies that indicate soy can help prevent osteoporosis when combined with an adequate calcium intake. The phytic acids and isoflavones identified in soy may help prevent certain cancers, although the data is still not conclusive.

Flaxseed is a plant-based source of omega-3 fatty acids which has been shown to reduce the total and LDL cholesterol.

Garlic has been touted by many cultures as medicinal, and some studies have shown

studies also show that garlic can reduce the risk of stomach and colon cancer. The odor of garlic comes from some sulfur-based compounds which may be the effective agent for medical effects.

Citrus fruits, loaded with vitamin C, are well-known to pre-

haps the most commonly recommended health fluids. There has been growing evidence that grape fluids and especially red wine can reduce the risk of heart disease. The research shows that elements in wine or grape juice, possibly the antioxidants from the phe-

surgeon specializing in sports medicine at Orthopedic Health Care in Boise. Collins is an avid participant in many of Idaho's outdoor activities. Please send your sports medicine questions to outdoors@idahostatesman.com or at The Idaho Statesman, P.O. Box 40, Boise, ID 83707.

SNOW REPORT

BOGUS BASIN

(As of 5:30 p.m. yesterday)

New snow: 0"
Summit: 46"
Base: 41"
Snow phone:
342-2100

BRUNDAGE

(As of 2:30 p.m. yesterday)

New snow: 0"
Summit: 50"
Base: 68"
Snow phone:
(888) ALL-SNOW

SUN VALLEY

(As of 9 a.m. yesterday)

New snow: 0"
Summit: 51"
Base: 37"
Snow phone:
(800) 635-4150

TAMARACK

(As of 6 a.m. yesterday)

New snow: 0"
Summit: 58"
Base: 31"
Snow phone:
(208) 325-1111

ONLINE

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Find links to current reports for Bogus, Brundage, Tamarack and Sun Valley and visit our Idaho OutdoorsSki and Snowboard Guide