

What are polyphenols

Polyphenols are a unique group of compounds, naturally found in plant foods. While there are thousands of different types of polyphenols, there are four main families of polyphenols with unique chemical structures — flavonoids, lignans, stilbenes and phenolic acids.

Consuming a rich diversity of polyphenols provides a number of health benefits through their anti-inflammatory and antioxidant actions. Research has found that polyphenols are beneficial in supporting cardiometabolic health. More recently polyphenols have also been found to influence the gut ecosystem, contributing to improved gut microbiome health and function.

Foods high in polyphenols

Increase your intake of polyphenols by including the following foods in your daily diet.

Fruits (1 cup)	Vegetables & legumes (½ cup)	Grains, nuts & seeds (30g)	Seasonings (dried)	Beverages (150mL)
Apple	Artichoke, globe, head	Almonds	Cloves	Black tea
Black elderberry	Asparagus	Cacao	Rosemary	Coffee, filter
Blackberries	Broccoli	Chestnuts	Sage, common	Green tea
Blackcurrants	Celery leaves	Flaxseed meal	Thyme, common	
Blueberries	Chicory leaves	Hazelnuts	Turmeric	
Grapes	Olives	Pecans		
Kakadu plum	Onion, red	Rye, whole grain		
Peach	Onion, yellow	Walnuts		
Plum	Shallots			
Pomegranate	Soy			
Prunes	Spinach			
Raspberries				
Redcurrants				
Strawberries				
Sweet cherries				

Based on standard serving sizes

Tips for incorporating polyphenol-rich foods into your diet

- Eat a Mediterranean-style diet as a source of polyphenol-rich foods.
- Polyphenols are what give many plant foods their colour. Regularly consume a variety of colours in the diet including reds and dark purples for the highest polyphenol intake.
- Try adding cacao to your smoothies, make a homemade hot chocolate or mix into a chia pudding.
- Combine walnuts and pecans with some fresh berries such as blueberries, raspberries, blackberries or strawberries for a delicious snack or tossed together in a summer salad.
- Mix ground flaxseed meal into your morning oats or sprinkle onto some yoghurt.
- Include olives in your next homemade pizza or pasta dish or make an olive tapenade dip.
- Cook with a variety of herbs and spices including cloves, rosemary, thyme and turmeric.
- Keep the skin on your foods where possible, as polyphenols tend to be concentrated in these areas. Do not throw out other edible parts, like the leaves on bunches of celery which tend to contain more polyphenols than the stalks.



Recipe ideas

Sweet potato and pecan brownie (makes 12)

Ingredients:

- 2 cups sweet potato puree (refer to Method)
- $\frac{2}{3}$ cup maple syrup
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup almond butter
- 3 tbsp coconut or olive oil
- 1 cup cacao powder
- $\frac{2}{3}$ cup oat or all-purpose flour
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup chopped pecans
- 1 tsp baking powder
- Pinch of salt

Method:

- To make sweet potato puree – cook 3 medium sized sweet potatoes by your desired method. Remove skin and blend the cooked sweet potatoes (using a blender, food processor or electric stick mixer) to reach a smooth puree consistency. Set aside and allow to cool.
- Preheat oven to 170 °C. Line a 20x20cm baking tray with baking paper.
- In a large mixing bowl add the wet ingredients - sweet potato puree, maple syrup, almond butter, oil and stir to combine.
- Add the cacao powder, flour, baking powder and salt to the wet ingredients and mix well.
- Pour the brownie mix into the lined baking tray. Top with chopped pecans.
- Bake for 30 minutes. Remove from the oven and allow the brownies to cool for 20-30 mins.
- Slice into 12 even pieces. Serve at room temperature or warmed. Store in the refrigerator for up to 7 days.

Porridge and mixed berry compote (serves 2)



Ingredients:

Berry compote

- 2 cups frozen mixed berries
- 50 ml fresh orange or lemon juice
- 1 tbsp vanilla extract
- 1 tbsp chia seeds
- ¼ tsp cinnamon
- ¼ tsp grated fresh ginger

Method:

Berry compote

- Combine all ingredients, except chia seeds, in a saucepan on medium-low heat and allow to simmer for 5-10 minutes or until cooked to desired consistency.
- Turn off the heat and add the chia seeds to the compote mixture. Mix well and let it rest for 5 minutes, ensuring the chia absorbs some of the liquid.

Porridge

- 1 cup oats
- 2 cups water or milk
- 2 tbsp flaxseed meal

Porridge

- Add all ingredients to a saucepan on low heat and stir until creamy.
- Remove from heat when desired consistency is reached.
- Transfer porridge to serving bowls and top with berry compote.
- Drizzle honey and sprinkle cinnamon on top and enjoy!

A photograph showing a variety of nuts and seeds scattered on a rustic wooden surface. There are almonds, walnuts, hazelnuts, and blueberries. In the foreground, there are some glass jars, one containing a yellow liquid, possibly honey or oil. The lighting is warm and natural.

Consuming polyphenol
rich foods can promote a
healthy gut microbiome and
help support digestive and
gastrointestinal health