more and more, researchers are learning how the way we eat can influence our physical and emotional health. Most people don’t think of food as medication, but in reality it’s the single biggest medication we have available.

Fruity Tofu Shake
1 1/2 Cup fresh or frozen fruit (strawberries, raspberries, cut up peaches, mangos, nectarines, or pitted dark sweet cherries)
1 1/2 Cup orange juice
2 Tbsp. Honey
1 - 10 Ounce pkg. lite tofu cut up
Partially thaw frozen fruit. Combine ingredients in blender and blend well. Makes 3 1/3 cups.

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Resources: Food Your Miracle Medicine, Jean Carper, 1993.

No doubt there were those who thought Hippocrates was behind the times back in 400 B.C. when the so-called father of modern medicine said, “Let food be your medicine and medicine be your food.” And more than a few probably considered lightbulb inventing visionary Thomas Edison to be a tad dim for his claim that “the doctor of the future will give no medicines but will interest his patients in the care of the human frame, in diet and in the causes of disease.”

You might have snickered when that wisest voice of all, Mom’s, boasted of the

The Hearth Fire Series has been awarded the NEHC Seal of Approval
curative powers of homemade chicken soup or nagged you to eat more vegetables.

Now, after decades of depending on drugs and high-tech surgery, more Americans are finally heed ing the words of Hippocrates, Edison, and dear ol' Mom. Words that have been known since the beginning of time: **FOOD IS STRONG MEDICINE.**

**WHY IS HEALTHY EATING IMPORTANT?**
A balanced diet helps meet your nutritional and non-nutritional needs and may help you prevent and manage certain diseases. A healthy diet may also improve the quality of your life.

**Meet your nutrient needs**
Your body uses nutrients to:
- Supply energy that keeps your heart beating, your brain active, and your muscles working.
- Provide structure (to build bones, muscles, & tendons).
- Regulate body processes (to maintain body temperature and to carry oxygen in the blood).

**The essential nutrients are:**
- Proteins, carbohydrates, and fats. They provide energy to the body.
- Water, which is also considered a major nutrient, is vital to your health and must be replaced constantly.
- Vitamins and minerals, which are also known as micro-nutrients, play many important roles in the structure and function of our body. They make new cells and promote wound healing.

   Eating a diet that is varied, balanced, and moderate can provide you with all the nutrients you need without getting too much or too little of any one nutrient. In the United States, the nutrients most commonly lacking in the diet include iron, calcium, folate (a B vitamin), and vitamin D.

   It contains vitamins C and E, potassium and magnesium all of which help in fighting disease. The elements found in pumpkin have been found to aid in the decrease of cancer, including the lung, colon, bladder, cervix, breast, and skin.

   **Hint:** Choose one with clear, unbroken skin and no soft spots. Store in a cool place until ready to use. Pumpkin is not just for pies, it can be used in savory and hearty main dish meals.

**SPINACH**
Popeye is not the only one in need of the benefits of spinach. This green leafy vegetable helps in the prevention of cardiovascular disease, including strokes and coronary heart disease. Spinach has been shown to reduce the risk of cancer in the colon, lungs, stomach, ovaries, prostate and breast. It also aids in stopping the progression of macular degeneration and cataracts.

   **Hint:** Three-fourths cup of spinach per day may reduce depression. The folic acid in the spinach acts as an antidepressant.

**TOMATOES**
Tomatoes contain the powerful cancer fighter Lycopene. Lycopene gives the tomatoes their red color and is twice as powerful as betacarotene in fighting cancer. The good news is that Lycopene is present even after the tomatoes have been processed.

   Tomatoes are low in fat and sodium and rich in potassium making them heart healthy too.

   **Hint:** Good tomatoes are smooth, well formed, and fragrant. To enjoy the freshness of tomatoes year round, blanch them in boiling water for about 2 minutes, plunge them in ice water and drain. Remove skins or chop and freeze in recipe-size portions for up to a year.

   Don’t forget garlic, onions, red peppers, shiitake mushrooms, olive oil, soy grains and milk, which are all beneficial to your health.

   From arthritis to wrinkles
fiber, and are a modest source of vitamin C when raw.  
*Be aware that eating grapefruit or drinking grapefruit juice may lessen or increase the action of certain drugs. Check with your doctor to know for sure.

**PRUNES**
All prunes are plums, but not all plums are prunes. Prunes are the dried fruit from a particular species of plum trees whose fruit has firm flesh and is naturally high in sugar and acidity. They are rich in vitamin A, iron, potassium, the B vitamins and magnesium. The prune’s fiber is mostly the insoluble form—the kind that’s best for lowering blood cholesterol. They have been known for many years as a remedy for preventing or treating constipation.  
*Hint: Tightly wrapped in a cool dry place prunes will keep for months. If prunes are very dry, simmer in a bit of apple or orange juice until tender.*

**CITRUS FRUITS**
Oranges, grapefruits, limes, lemons, and tangerines are excellent sources of vitamin C. The flavonoids in citrus fruits help inhibit cancer cell growth and reduce the incidence of heart attack or stroke. They are anti-inflammatory, antiallergen and antimicrobial. Because of their high content of Vitamin C, they may help ward off colds, asthma attacks and/or bronchitis. They may also, reduce the risk of colon, pancreatic or cervical cancer and perhaps breast cancer.  
*Hint: Whole citrus fruits pack a more powerful punch than juice. When the juice is extracted, it tends to loose the antioxidants.*

Healthy eating can improve your nutrition and help reduce your risk for several diseases, including:

**Cancer**
<> Eating more fruits and vegetables is associated with a lower risk of lung, oral, esophageal, stomach, and colon cancer.
<> A high-fat diet is associated with increased risk of colon, prostate, rectum, and endometrium cancer.

**High Cholesterol and Coronary Artery Disease (CAD)**
<> Eating plenty of fruits and vegetables, following a low-fat diet, and eating low-fat dairy products, can reduce the risk of high blood pressure and lower blood pressure, which may also reduce your CAD.

**Osteoporosis**
<> Getting enough calcium will protect you from osteoporosis. Calcium is found in dairy products, green vegetables, and in many products that are calcium-enriched.

**Spina Bifida**
<> Eating foods that contain folate or folic acid (such as leafy, green vegetables or folic acid enriched grains) before and during pregnancy can help protect babies from this birth defect.

**SUPER FOODS THAT FIGHT DISEASE**
Tomatoes, broccoli, blueberries, yogurt and chocolate are among scientists’ top choices of what you should eat to strengthen your immune system and beat back illness. Other healing foods include:

**APPLES**
"An apple a day keeps the doctor away" is as true now as it has always been. Apples are a good source of nutrients and are high in fiber. Apples are also high in quercetin, which fights
lung cancer, asthma, diabetes and heart disease. Apples are an aid to constipation but the juice may cause diarrhea in children.

*Hint: Buy apples without bruises and handle them carefully. After cutting the apple, coat it with lemon, apple or orange juice to keep it from turning brown.*

**APRICOTS**

Apricots are fat-free, high in fiber, high in iron as well as potassium, rich in vitamin C, low in calories and are a good source of beta-carotene, a substance that protects against the cell damage that occurs when the body burns oxygen.

*Hint: The ideal fresh apricot has a golden orange color. A pink blush indicates sweetness. Treat apricots as you would peaches. Leave them at room temperature until fully ripe, and then refrigerate them in plastic bags.*

**BANANAS OR PLANTAINS**

Bananas can soothe an upset stomach and aid in controlling diarrhea as well as acting as a laxative for constipation in some people. They strengthen the stomach lining against acid and ulcers. According to some researchers eating bananas as part of our regular diet can reduce the incidence of stroke by 40%. Bananas are high in potassium, high in fiber, low in sodium and have a modest amount of vitamin C.

**BEANS**

Beans help prevent cancer, especially pancreatic, colon, breast and prostate cancer. They help control weight and help to lower cholesterol levels. Beans provide protein in large amounts without the fat in the same amount of lean red meat. The fiber in beans helps fill you up with fewer calories. Beans also provide vitamins, minerals and fiber. The fiber helps regulate the blood sugar levels associated with hypoglycemia, diabetes and insulin resistance. It provides slow-burning energy and keeps your blood sugar from rising too quickly after eating.

*Hint: A good way to include more beans in your diet is to sprinkle them on salads, include them in soup or use in place of beef in tacos and burritos.*

**BLUEBERRIES**

Blueberries help prevent aging of the brain and the degenerative diseases associated with aging and help prevent cancer. The antioxidant contained in blueberries helps to block the metabolic pathways that cause cancer.

*Hint: Fresh blueberries should be a powdery blue. Incorporate them into pancakes or waffles.*

**BROCCOLI**

The National Cancer Institute values broccoli as a number one anti-cancer food. And it’s not just broccoli but all its vegetable kin—cabbage, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, mustard, kale, collard and turnip greens that have this extraordinary power to fight cancer. The cabbage family vegetables contain potent chemicals called indoles that block harmful carcinogens before they do their dirty work. They help prevent cancer of the stomach, lung, colon and rectum as well as helping to prevent birth defects and helps prevent heart disease. The cabbage family promotes cardiovascular health and because of the Vitamin C, which helps with the absorption of calcium, broccoli helps build bones. They are rich in calcium, vitamin C, potassium, vitamin E and vitamin B6.

*Hint: Choose heads of broccoli with small, closed, compact buds and firm stems. Good eaten raw, steamed, added to other vegetable dishes.*

**CARROTS**

Eating carrots helps prevent macular degeneration, a widespread eye disease that’s the leading cause of blindness in America. The protection comes from beta-carotene. Fresh carrots are a good source of potassium, whether raw or cooked; are virtually fat free and high in soluble