10 Superfoods for Busy People

*By Maryann Tomovich Jacobsen, MS, RD*

Mention the word ‘superfood’ and most people think of some exotic food that takes a bit of time to prepare or shop for — and one that kids may not love. So I thought it would be fun to provide a list of superfoods that are not only familiar and easy to get, but provide a big bang for their nutritional buck. Here are 10 simple, everyday foods that pack a punch in the nutrition department. And to qualify, they have to be easy to prepare.

**1. The leafy greens:**Having [leafy greens](http://www.webmd.com/diet/healthy-kitchen-11/leafy-greens-rated) around is a great way to boost nutrition, as most are rich in vitamins A, C, and K and folate. Make spinach salads, use romaine on sandwiches, bake up some [kale chips](http://blogs.webmd.com/food-and-nutrition/2012/03/kale-chips.html), or add some greens to your family’s favorite smoothie.

**2. Bananas:** We love bananas in our house. They are filling, rich in potassium, and are also a prebiotic, fuel for the gut’s good bacteria. Kids usually love them and they are easily transported.

**3. Sweet potatoes:** Like all the spuds, sweet potatoes are rich in potassium but they also pack a significant amount of vitamins A and C with a sweet taste kids like. Poke them with a fork multiple times on both sides, put in the microwave for 2-4 minutes a side (depending on size), and mash them up with a little butter and brown sugar — you have a winning side dish!

**4. The Incredible Egg:** Rich in protein and one of the richest sources of choline, a nutrient most Americans fall short on, eggs are a great bet. You can also get omega-3 rich eggs with DHA for an added bonus.

The best part is they are easy to prepare either scrambled or boiled. Picky kids who won’t eat eggs often will eat French toast or other items with eggs in them.

**5. Hummus:** This wonderful food is a good source of protein (from the chickpeas) and healthy fat from olive oil. Good for kids of all ages as a dip (or baby food) and for adults. Try it rolled up in a tortilla/wrap for quick lunch or mixed into lasagna.

**6. Nuts and seeds:** With protein and healthy fats, nuts, seeds, and nut butters pack a punch. Busy families often eat in a hurry and they are perfect for making snack mixes with dried fruit and whole grain cereal. Nut butters are great for quick sandwiches — just look for the natural kind without hydrogenated oils. Bonus? They provide vitamin E, a shortfall nutrient for people of all ages.

**7. Canned salmon:** Salmon is definitely a super food — rich in omega-3 fats, DHA and EPA, and also a source of protein and vitamin D. Canned salmon is one of the most convenient and cost-effective ways to enjoy it. Just mix it with some olive oil, yogurt, and small apple chunks and you have fillings for a sandwich. You can also top on salads or make [salmon cakes](http://www.raisehealthyeaters.com/2011/05/super-simple-salmon-cakes/%22%3E) for pickier palates.

**8. Whole Grain Bread:** While there are a lot of whole grain options, whole grain bread is one of the easiest to incorporate in sandwiches, grilled or plain, and in items like French toast. One sandwich and you have two out of the three recommended amounts of whole grains under your belt.

**9. Yogurt:** Where else can you get calcium and friendly bacteria along with nutrients like protein, B12, phosphorus, and potassium in one little package? Topped with nuts, you have the perfect snack.

**10. Beans and Peas:** The 2010 Dietary Guidelines highlight beans and peas as foods that double as both a protein source and a vegetable. Beans are easy to prepare and are rich in fiber, protein, and a slew of other nutrients. They are filling as well thanks to their soluble fiber content.

So include black beans as a side (spiced with some garlic powder and cumin) or add low-fat refried beans to a whole wheat tortilla with cheese or slow cook a variety of dried beans (soaked overnight) with broth, canned tomatoes, chopped onions, and spices all day for a tasty soup.

Some of the most convenient and easy-to-prepare foods are also the healthiest.