

of the goodness we need.'

Levels of antioxidants found in fruit and veg help maintain good health. They help mop up free radicals which are highly destructive to the body. 'Imagine getting a prescription for broccoli, garlic and wheatgrass,' says nutritionist Patrick Holford. 'This is the scenario that scientists are predicting as more phytochemicals are found in food.'

## EAT A RAINBOW OF COLOURS!

According to medical nutritionist Naomi Beinart, the best way to ensure you're eating a good variety of superfoods is to have different coloured fruits and vegetables in your daily diet, the most effective groups being orange and purple. 'In the orange group, include carrots, butternut squash and mangoes,' says Naomi. 'These orange foods contain carotenoids which are fat soluble antioxidants and help protect the liver from free radical damage. In the purple group, I would include red grapes, blueberries and strawberries, which all provide energy and essential nutrients.'

With more and more exotic and colourful fruit, vegetables and grains being declared as the latest superfoods, it's hard to know just what to include in your diet for optimum health. Here are the essential foods you should not be living without...

● **Avocados** When ripe, avocados are almost a complete food, being a source of potassium, vitamins A and E, some B and C vitamins and a little protein and starch along with the avocado oil which is mainly a monounsaturated fat. They neutralise free radicals, making them good for the heart, circulation and anti-ageing and are also a good source of lutein which appears to protect arteries from hardening and the eyes from cataracts and macular degeneration.

● **Berries** Blackberries, blueberries, blackcurrants, strawberries and raspberries and the more exotic Goji and acai berries are a rich source of vitamin C and a high concentration of powerful anti-ageing antioxidants. They're good for the heart and circulation, and may even help to prevent the onset of Alzheimer's disease.



**Above: Demi Moore and Sharon Stone are known to be big fans of prunes! Left: Shilpa Shetty credits her health to sensible eating. Below and left: Avocados, berries, carrots and garlic are all superfoods**

● **Broccoli** Belongs to the crucifer family, and is found to be one of nature's top superfoods helping to protect against cancer, particularly cancer of the colon, heart disease and a wide range of other medical conditions. Its powerful sulforaphane content delivers a double blow to cancer-causing chemicals – destroying any carcinogenic compounds and then creating enzymes that eat up any carcinogens left over from that reaction. (Other crucifers include cauliflower, horseradish,

cabbage, spring greens, turnips, Brussel sprouts and kale.) Compounds produced during the digestion of crucifer vegetables also suppress free radical formation, making them valuable for joint problems.

● **Carrots** A single carrot is so rich in beta-carotene, it will supply your vitamin A need for an entire day. This and the many other beneficial compounds found in carrots account for its beneficial effects in respiratory infections and disorders of the skin and eyes. Carrots can also protect against cancer – especially of the lungs. Eating carrots will increase levels of red blood cells and studies have also shown that carrots have a protective action against excess ultra-violet radiation – perfect for those who want to stay looking young. Packed with antioxidants, in the form of vitamins A, C and E, carrots are essential eating for people who suffer from atherosclerosis (narrowed arteries).

