Helpful, Energizing Foods for Lupus

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Energizing Foods for Lupus

Dealing with lupus is more than just fighting the big battles for your health and survival. Yes, there are often frightening symptoms we worry about; a heavy pain in the chest and difficulty breathing quickly equates to, “Is it my lungs or my heart this time?” Let's dive into foods for lupus.

We don’t worry because we want to. We worry because we have to. It is a real threat.

Someone with lupus lives with this kind of real fear all the time. I realize from experience that I may want to ignore a symptom, but honestly, it could be dangerous to my health that one time that I do.

This worry and lupus stress can also fuel a flare and suck our energy dry. Be aware that there is a fine line between healthy caution and being overly fearful, and it can affect your health.

Then there are the daily choices we make about what we put into our bodies and the activities we take on. With lupus, we never know which of our many daily choices will come together to create the perfect storm; a full-blown flare.

Lupus warriors know that the activities we choose, combined with the quality of our sleep, the weather, stress and a myriad of other seemingly insignificant choices we make can play a role in how much energy we have to tackle the coming day. And I believe that what I put into my body can be equally impactful on whether lupus goes into attack mode and how much energy I have to fight back. Let's go over what foods for lupus help and detract from your energy levels and overall health.

You Are What You Eat: Energy and Health

It is a pretty well-known concept — you are what you eat. Eat processed, greasy, or fast foods and you will probably compromise your health in some way.

With lupus, I believe that is 100 percent true. There are numerous foods you can eat to help in your goal of increasing energy levels and your chances of facing the day with more energy and less discomfort.

After a lot of research into improving my eating habits, I have found certain foods are better at providing that energy.

- **Smoothies**: Try adding a touch of fresh mint to any fruit-based or chocolate almond milk smoothie. Fresh mint is loaded with natural antiviral medicinal agents. Add ginger powder to a yogurt or almond milk-based smoothie for its anti-inflammatory benefits. Cranberry juice can reduce the bacteria traveling throughout your bloodstream and is said to cleanse the body and arteries of things that can lead to infection.
- **Sweet potatoes:** It might be their low glycemic level (less than white potatoes), which means the body

burns its energy slowly and steadily rather than getting a momentary boost, but I am convinced that I have more energy if I keep these in my diet a few days per week. Try baking them like a regular potato or peel and slice into strips like fries.

- **Rice and veggies**: I steam fresh yellow squash, zucchini and broccoli and serve them over rice that I season with a touch of curry and turmeric. Turmeric is considered a powerful natural anti-inflammatory, so I try to incorporate it into my cooking. The combination of rice with veggies increases my energy. Broccoli has energy-boosting antioxidants and is believed to calm nerves and promote sleep, which helps with energy the next day.
- **Eggs**: Yes, simple as it sounds, a couple of eggs have the protein I need and none of the bad things I will find at the drive-thru window. I boil them and they, along with some organic sweet potato chips, serve as a healthy and quick lunch.

Next page: more foods for lupus you should eat and how to avoid flares from food.

You Are What You Eat: Energy and Health

- **Nuts**: Just a handful of cashews as a snack seems to give me a boost when I am running on empty. I also eat organic peanut butter on celery. Celery is said to help reduce inflammation and I have noticed more energy from this combination than if I eat a peanut butter sandwich.
- **Molasses:** I cook with molasses in many of my meat dishes. Drizzle a little over burgers or skinless chicken on the grill, add a little garlic powder to counteract the sweetness, and you have a rich flavor that helps with energy naturally. Molasses is very high in iron and offers healthy carbohydrates to provide a boost.
- **Chia seed**: I found these by accident when I bought some organic sweet potato tortilla chips that were covered in them, and the result for me was more energy. Chia is said to be a great plant-based source of complete protein, high in antioxidants, nutrients and calcium and balances blood sugar levels to burn energy evenly without spikes or drops.
- **Lemons**: I have been told by my doctor that added to your water, lemons are a natural way to reduce inflammation and cleanse the body better of waste. The key I think is to also drink plenty of water. Think of it as constantly flushing out the body of waste and toxins. I know I should drink more water than I do and often coffee is my downfall when it comes to choosing a beverage.

Avoiding Flares From Food

I believe I have seen a pattern with some foods I might normally choose to eat. There just seem to be certain foods that, without fail, cause my lupus to flare. Here are a few I must force myself to avoid:

- **Soda (diet or regular)**: I used to have a can or two of soda each week, but I began to see a pattern of flares within 12-24 hours. Thinking it was the “diet” ingredients causing it, I switched to regular soda, but without fail the flare still occurred. I now drink tea or lemon water.
- **The drive-thru**: Fast food was once my favorite, easy solution to a meal. I mean if you don’t have the energy to cook, it makes sense, right? Wrong! I have seen a direct correlation between hitting the drive-thru and a sudden flare. Not to mention I feel terrible after eating greasy food. The good news is once you cleanse your body of it for a while, you are disgusted by eating it. No cravings!

- **Too sweet**: Yes, even Stevia, the “natural” alternative to sugar can cause issues. At one point I was trying health shakes and natural herbal supplements that had more than their fair share of natural sweeteners in them and initially, I felt more energy. Then the positive effects lessened and what it left me with was reactive hypoglycemia — which meant I felt shaky and awful if I ate anything too sweet (like an ice cream sundae) or if I went too long without eating.
- **Nitrates**: Found in bacon, hot dogs and sandwich meats this preservative is huge on my list of things to avoid. Breakfast with bacon combined with pancakes drizzled with fake maple syrup (the cheaper mass-produced variety versus the pricey real stuff) and I am in a flare within three hours.
- **The carnivore plate**: When a meal consists of mostly meat, I always feel the effects the next day. I think

with lupus, balance is required, and my plate is normally filled with only one part of meat to three parts of veggies. If I stray, I feel a difference the next day.

It is hard to stay on track with your diet. I stray, and I pay the price. It happens to the best of us.

Try and think about what a flare will mean to your health and how you feel and be strong when it comes time to make the best choices for your health. You will be glad you did.