

Medical Minute

FOOD LOOK ALIKES

Have you ever noticed that a surprising number of healthy foods look like the body parts they're supposed to help? It's almost like Mother Nature was labeling the produce aisle. "Don't bother reading the nutrition facts. Just look at it!"



Take a tomato. It's red, has four chambers... and so does your heart. Coincidence? Maybe. But tomatoes really are great for your heart. They help lower LDL cholesterol, regulate blood pressure, reduce inflammation, and provide antioxidants that protect your cardiovascular system. Apparently Mother Nature invented color-coding long before Apple did.



Then there are kidney beans. Whoever named those wasn't exactly working overtime. "What should we call these?" "Well... they look like kidneys." "Meeting adjourned!" The funny thing is they actually are good for your kidneys. Their fiber helps your digestive system do more of the work, giving your kidneys a little less to do, while the magnesium and potassium help keep blood pressure and electrolytes in balance. That's a pretty good return for a bean.



Sweet potatoes look a lot like the pancreas. Again, it's as if the produce department came with an owner's manual. Sweet potatoes have anti-inflammatory and antidiabetic properties, can improve insulin resistance, and are packed with antioxidants that may help protect the pancreas. The pancreas finally has a friend. Usually, the only time we think about it is when it quits talking to us.



Celery, bok choy, and rhubarb all look surprisingly bone-like. Long, sturdy, and not nearly as exciting as ice cream. They contain nutrients like vitamin K, calcium, magnesium, and potassium that help support bone strength and density. So if someone tells you that you're "all skin and bones," maybe just eat what's shaped like the bones.



And then there's the walnut. It looks exactly like a tiny brain—with two hemispheres, all those little folds, the whole thing. It's almost creepy. Walnuts support brain health, improve memory, reduce inflammation, and may help protect against cognitive decline. Which explains why every time I walk into the kitchen and forget why I'm there, I'm hungry for walnuts. Apparently, my brain needs a software update.

If this whole theory were perfect, though, I'd like to know why donuts don't look like six-pack abs.