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# CHIPS

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# Lead a healthy lifestyle in 2022 and beyond by adding potatoes to the mix

By Claire Julsing Strydom, registered dietician, and Immaculate Zinde, contributor

**O**range may be the new black, but a healthy lifestyle never goes out of style. In a time of a global pandemic, more than ever, protecting your health is essential. Self-care is a bit of a buzzword and immediately we think of candles, time spent in nature, retail therapy or an inviting bubble bath ... but what about healthy habits like physical activity and good nutrition? These are ways to take care of yourself and your health to reduce the risk of diseases like diabetes, cardiovascular disease and cancer.

Are you ready to supercharge your self-care and take the leap to lead a healthy lifestyle in 2022?

## The results are in!

Using data from the Framingham Heart Study, researchers from Boston University School of Medicine monitored the development of disease or death in participants over 16 years. The outcomes are simple: The longer you lead a healthy lifestyle, the less likely you are to develop diseases later in life.

The research focussed on cardiovascular health specifically, and found that for each five-year period that participants had ideal heart health, they were 33% less likely to develop high blood pressure, had a 25% lower chance of getting diabetes, heart and kidney disease, and had lowered their risk of premature death by 14%. It doesn't get more convincing than that!

The bottom line is that the longer a person doesn't smoke, eats healthily to maintain a stable weight, exercises regularly, has stable blood pressure, blood sugar and cholesterol levels, the lower their chances of disease or early death are.

Health is wealth. In 2022, healthy meals do not have to be boring. If anything, if it doesn't look appealing on a plate, it is far from healthy.

## All food groups matter

Variety is the spice of life, they say. So often the focus when aiming to lead a healthy lifestyle is fixated on removing certain foods with the aim of 'losing' weight – ditch carbs, ditch sugar and eliminate alcohol. But all food groups matter.

We forget to focus on all the amazing benefits gained by living healthily. A healthy, balanced diet means consuming foods that are correctly prepared and elegantly dressed. Never forget to count your calories. Size matters! During these tough times, saving money by spending less on expensive treats, eating out and takeaways can put you in charge of your own life.

## Foods to function at your best

Your body functions at its best when you fuel it with nutrient-dense foods that are rich in fibre, vitamins and minerals. When choosing carbohydrates, fill up on legumes (beans, lentils and chickpeas), and whole and unprocessed high-fibre cereals (barley, bulgur wheat and brown rice).

Potatoes with their skin on are also a high-quality, plant-based carbohydrate source. Pick proteins that are lean and low in animal fats such as chicken (without skin), meat cuts with the fat removed, fish and low-fat dairy.

Plant foods are rich in natural compounds called phytonutrients that are anti-inflammatory and prevent damage to the cells of your body. Always remember, good quality carbohydrates are not the enemy. They are the body's fuel for energy!

## Start today

While essential, optimal nutrition and high-quality food is not the only focus. Fitness levels and regular physical activity will also help you to love the skin you're in. Work towards reaching 150 minutes of moderate activity per week (that's five days of 30 minutes of exercise you enjoy like swimming, jogging, cycling, skipping or aerobic classes).

Don't skimp on sleep – follow a routine that helps you get eight hours of quality sleep every night. Stay connected with friends, family and loved ones and surround yourself with people who have a positive impact on your life. Meditate, eat, pray, love! 🍷

For references and more information on Potatoes SA's marketing projects, send an email to Immaculate Zinde at [immaculate@potatoes.co.za](mailto:immaculate@potatoes.co.za).