

## Ten food items to always keep in your kitchen

Written by Holyoke Enterprise

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After a long day at work or running errands, the last thing you want to do is head to the kitchen to cook a meal. Often we resort to the convenience of boxed foods or restaurants, which can be unhealthy—and expensive—options. How can you make sure you are eating healthy when you're constantly on the go?

According to Stephani Waldron-Trapp, ND, a faculty clinician at Northwestern Health Sciences University's Bloomington Natural Care Center in Bloomington, Minn., "There are many quick and easy options when it comes to eating healthy." She suggests 10 items to keep on-hand in your kitchen to make sure you and your family are eating healthy during your hectic day:

1. Mixed greens. You can buy the pre-washed greens and they are ready to go. Keep a bottle of dressing at work so you don't have to worry about topping your salad when you are running out the door.

Dressing suggestion: mix Barlene's flax seed oil, Braggs apple cider vinegar and pure maple syrup together; proportions to taste. It's an easy and healthy alternative to other salad dressings.

2. Hot cereals. Sick of the same old mush in the morning? Try these options instead: buckwheat flakes, quinoa flakes, steel cut oats or cream of brown rice—full of nutrients without the processed grains. Use pure maple syrup as a natural sweetener.

3. Eggs. Make sure to buy organic, free-range eggs. They are a great source of protein, healthy fats and vitamins. Cooking suggestion: hard-boil several eggs ahead of time so they are ready whenever you are.

4. Pre-packaged veggies. They come cut and washed—what's quicker than that? To defray the cost of pre-cut veggies, cut, wash and bag your own vegetables ahead of time. Just make sure to dry the vegetables before bagging them, otherwise they rot.

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5. Nuts, seeds and dried fruits. They make great toppings on anything from salads to cereals to wraps. Nuts contain a good amount of protein and healthy fats. (Warning: avoid peanuts – they are full of saturated fat.)

6. Quinoa. This is a grain that looks like brown rice and has a rich nutty flavor. And even better, it only takes 15 minutes to make rather than the 45 minutes it takes for standard rice.

Cooking suggestion: Take one cup of quinoa, rinse and drain. Add two cups of water or broth, then cover and bring to a boil. Finally, simmer for 15 minutes—“No peeking!” reminds Dr. Waldron-Trapp. “That’s the secret.”

7. Hummus. A great dip for chopped vegetables and very nutritional.

8. Wraps. Use your leftover meat from dinner the night before along with your mixed greens, chopped eggs or hummus. (Warning: Make sure your wrap does not contain aluminum or alum in the ingredients. Consuming aluminum has been linked to cognitive disorders.)

9. Avocado. A tasty treat full of Omega 3 fats. Suggestion: add some slices of avocado to your wrap!

10. Spaghetti. A simple dinner—just cook some noodles and pour on the sauce. Add spinach to your sauce and try using beans instead of meat. Also, try noodles made of kamut or rye rather than wheat to increase nutritional value.

Cooking suggestion: try the Muir Glen brand for a tasty and nutritious organic sauce.

It can be hard to stay healthy in a world of fast-paced work and tight budgets. But when you make your health a priority and stock your kitchen with quick and nutritious foods, you’ll begin to build the foundation for a healthy lifestyle.

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For additional resources, visit <http://www.nwhealth.edu/nns>, a Web site focusing on natural approaches to health and wellness hosted by Northwestern Health Sciences University.