

NUTRITION

NEWS TO LIVE BY

Why skip sodas? • Test your nutrient knowledge • Is an iron deficiency causing your cough?

3 ANTIDOTES TO OVEREATING We're all guilty of overindulging sometimes—an extra helping of potatoes here, a wedge of key lime pie there. But loading up on calories forces your body into overdrive as it tries to deconstruct the damage. “Just metabolizing food—especially fatty and carbohydrate-rich fare—causes the body to produce free radicals, which attack cells and can promote the development of chronic conditions including heart disease, diabetes and cancer,” says Ronald L. Prior, Ph.D., research chemist and nutritionist with the USDA at Arkansas Children's Nutrition Center. The more you consume, the more free radicals you produce. In fact, that's one theory why caloric restriction—a practice of cutting calories by 25 to 30 percent—may protect against some disease. But recent research suggests that there are two ways to reduce free radicals: eating fewer calories and consuming more nutrient-rich fare, such as the following. (We suggest you do both.) —*Amy Paturel*

DRINK WINE: Antioxidants in red wine, called polyphenols, may reduce the negative impact of high-fat foods, according to a study published in the *Journal of the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology* in January. In the study, people who ate a turkey cutlet cooked with wine had 75 percent lower levels of malondialdehyde (MDA)—a by-product of fat digestion linked with heart disease—than those who had the cutlet without wine. Other research shows that a compound called resveratrol in red wine mimics the effects of caloric restriction and improves health in mice. *Cook with red wine or enjoy a glass with dinner. (But remember, moderation is key!)*

DRIZZLE VINEGAR: Having a tablespoon of vinegar with your meal, perhaps drizzled on your salad, may temper the spike in blood sugar (a.k.a. glucose) that occurs after eating a big, carbohydrate-rich meal. This sugar surge is a problem particularly for people with diabetes, who can't clear glucose effectively; over time, excess glucose in the blood damages tissues. (For the rest of us, a steep rise in glucose triggers an equally rapid drop—which stokes appetite.) But in a 2005 study published in the *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*, consuming about 1 tablespoon of apple cider vinegar along with a bagel and fruit juice slashed the postmeal rise in glucose in half. It also resulted in subjects eating 200 to 275 fewer calories through the day. “The acid in vinegar may inhibit the digestion of the starch, so the starch is rendered into something like fiber, which can't be digested well,” says Carol Johnston, Ph.D., R.D., professor and chair of the department of nutrition at Arizona State University. *Drizzle a tablespoon of vinegar on your salad.*

EAT FRUIT: If you've indulged in a decadent meal, consider fruit for dessert. In the *Journal of the American College of Nutrition* last April, Prior and his colleagues showed that eating antioxidant-rich fruits—including berries, grapes, kiwi and cherries—helps minimize the free-radical damage that occurs after a meal. Eating caloric meals, without antioxidant-rich foods like fruits and vegetables, can have harmful effects over time, says Prior. *Finish your meal with a generous portion of fruit.*