

Natural Medicine: Liver- The Unpopular SuperFood

By Dr. Michael John Badanek, BS, DC, CNS, CTPP, DACBN, DCBCN, MSGR./CHEV

So you may be asking why would I promote eating liver as a superfood.

I would have asked myself the same question before I did some homework.

Before you turn your nose up at the thought of eating organ meat, let's take a look at why it's a super health food and what it may do for you.

Not many foods are worthy of the title "superfood." However, liver is one of them. Once a popular and treasured food source, liver has fallen out of favor. This is unfortunate because liver is a nutritional powerhouse. It's rich in protein, low in calories and packed with essential vitamins and minerals.

Regardless of its declining popularity, liver is possibly one of the most nutrient-dense foods on the planet and goes a long way in supplying your body with some wonderful absorbable nutrients!

While many people assume that plant-based foods: vegetable and fruits are the most nutrient dense foods on the planet, I think most would be surprised to learn that organ meats actually far surpass most plants for nutrient density and at the top of that list is liver.

Organ meats contain some of most highly prized nutrients in concentrations hard to find anywhere else. In general, organ meats are between 10 and 100 times higher in nutrients than corresponding muscle meats.

Liver Is a Great Source of Several Nutrients

The nutritional profile of liver is exceptional.

Here are the nutrients found in a 3.5-ounce (100-gram) serving of beef liver

Vitamin B12: Did you know it is estimated that 92% of Americans are nutrient-deficient and nearly 50% are deficient in vitamin B12? B12 deficiency can lead to issues like pernicious anemia, vascular disease, stroke, autoimmune conditions, fatigue and dementia. True B12 cannot be found in plants or sunlight and liver is THE richest source of B12.

Vitamin A: Vitamin A is important for normal vision, immune function and reproduction. It also helps organs like the heart and kidneys function properly. You were misled if you grew up hearing the phrase "eat your carrots for healthy eyesight". Yes, carrots (and other vegetables) contain Vitamin A, but it's not in the bioavailable form, retinol like liver. Beta carotene is the type of Vitamin A in veggies. Our bodies must convert beta carotene to retinol before we can actually make use of it. Unfortunately, the conversion rate is pretty poor.

Riboflavin (B2): Riboflavin is important for cellular development and function. It also helps turn food into energy

Folate (B9): Folate is an essential nutrient that plays a role in cell growth and the formation of DNA

Iron: Iron is another essential nutrient that helps carry oxygen around the body. The iron in liver is heme iron, the kind most easily absorbed by the body

Copper: Copper acts like a key to activate a number of enzymes, which then help regulate energy production, iron metabolism and brain function

Choline: Choline is important for brain development and liver function

CoQ10, a nutrient that is especially important for cardio-vascular function

Eating a single serving of liver can help you meet your daily recommended amount of all of these vitamins and minerals, reducing your risk of nutrient deficiency.

Liver is a great source of high-quality protein.

Common concerns about eating liver.

One of the common concerns about eating liver is that it contains toxins.

However, the liver does not store toxins. In fact, its job is to process toxins and make them safe by turning them into something that can be safely removed from the body.

So do not have any worries about toxins in liver because it is not an issue.

Another concern about eating liver is it may cause issues with excessive vitamin A

While there are concerns of toxicity due to over consumption of vitamin A, these concerns stem from studies in which moderate doses of synthetic vitamin A were found to cause problems and even contribute to birth defects. But, this does not happen with natural vitamin A found in high-quality liver. Vitamin A sourced from real, whole foods is an extremely important nutrient for human health and does not cause problems except in extremely, extremely large amounts. When people began taking synthetic vitamin A supplements, this was when we began to see vitamin A toxicity.

How Much Liver Should You Eat?

A good recommendation for liver is one 100-gram serving of only grass-fed beef (about 4 ounces) once or twice a week.

Here is good online company to purchase grass-fed liver:

<https://whiteoakpastures.com>

If the thought of eating liver simply turns you off then I recommend liver + additional organ meat supplements.

Here is a good product I recommend:

<https://heartandsoil.co/collections/all/products/beef-organs> (As a side note, I receive no commission for recommending this product)