NorthShore University HealthSystem

SUMMER SUPERFOODS

SAVOR THE SEASON

Picnics at the park, backyard barbecues, lazy pool days and fresh produce from the garden are all trademarks of summer. With so many fruits and vegetables in peak season during the summer months, it's easy to make meals nutritious and fresh.

The experts at NorthShore University HealthSystem break down the nutritional value and health benefits of some of summer's superfoods.

BOOST YOUR BRAIN WITH BLUEBERRIES

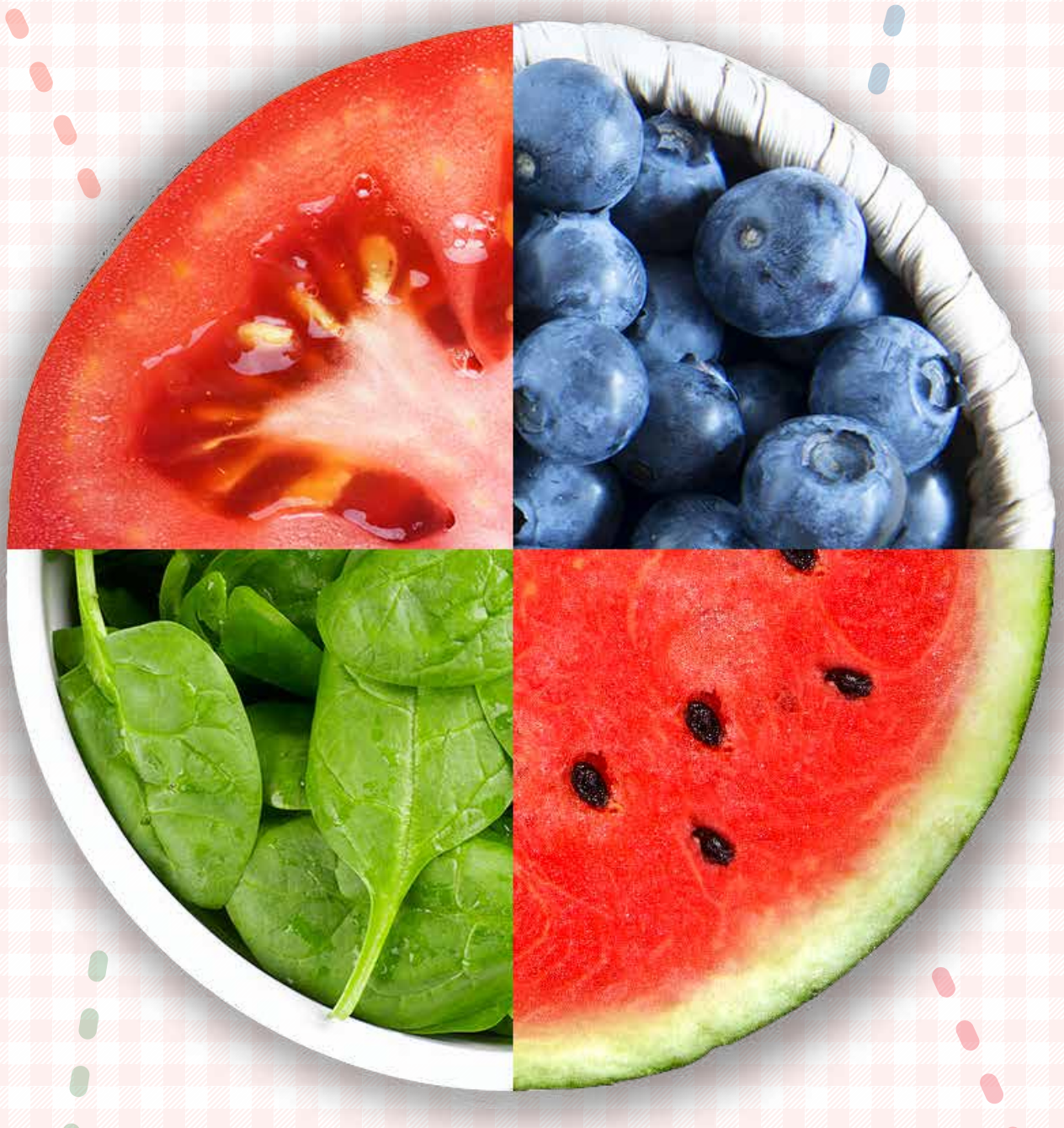
Blueberries are loaded with fiber and an antioxidant called anthocyanin, which helps fight age-related diseases. A 2010 study shows that adults 75 and older who consume blueberries on a daily basis have improved learning and memory function.

Tip: Blueberries are a great low-calorie snack. One cup is only 80 calories and provides nearly 1/4 the recommended amount of vitamin C you need for the day.

EAT YOUR VITAMINS WITH TOMATOES

Tomatoes are a great source of potassium and vitamins A and C, as well as antioxidants such as lycopene and lutein. Research shows that a diet rich in tomatoes may help maintain strong bones and reduce the risk of heart disease.

Tip: The antioxidants found in tomatoes may help protect against sun damage and wrinkles caused by sun exposure.



STAY HYDRATED WITH WATERMELON

Watermelon gets its bright red hue from an antioxidant called lycopene, which may lower the risk of cancer and heart disease. One cup of watermelon offers 1/3 the recommended daily intake of vitamin A, which helps keep hair and skin moisturized.

Tip: It's easy to stay hydrated with watermelon, which is 92% water. Pick this sweet treat over high-calorie desserts.

GET STRONG WITH SPINACH

Spinach has plenty of vitamins A and C, as well as folate (a type of B vitamin) and magnesium. Each plays a role in healthy muscle and nerve function. Studies have shown spinach can help combat osteoporosis, arthritis and several types of cancer.

Tip: Get your calcium! Your body can absorb more calcium when spinach is cooked. Sauté with garlic & lemon for a healthy side dish.

Sources:
northshore.org, webmd.com, livescience.com, nih.gov, usnews.com, pubs.acs.org