

GREENS

A GIRL'S BEST FRIEND

Popeye was right – eat your dark leafy greens every day!

Considered to be the most nutrient-dense foods on the planet, dark leafy greens are the foundation to creating ultimate hormonal health. Yet, ironically they are the foods most missing in the Standard American Diet. Eating greens is one of the best ways to naturally “crowd out” the effects of potentially harmful foods and environmental toxins. This is because greens provide special nutritional support for three key body systems.

1. The body's detox system
2. The body's antioxidant system
3. The body's inflammatory/anti-inflammatory system

Green vegetables support these three body systems by cleaning the blood, improving circulation, strengthening the immune system and reducing inflammation throughout the body.

Eat Your GREENS

 mustard greens	Mustard greens prevent arthritis and anemia, lower LDL cholesterol, battle the onset of heart disease, and offer protection against cancerous growths.	15 cal vitamins A, B6, C, E iron, folate, calcium, potassium, manganese, magnesium, phosphorus, potassium, riboflavin, thiamin
 arugula	Arugula inhibits cancer growth and improves immune defenses. It is an excellent choice for building healthy bones.	6 cal vitamins A, C, E iron, folate, calcium, potassium, manganese, magnesium, phosphorus, potassium, riboflavin, thiamin
 romaine	Romaine lettuce promotes heart health and prevents strokes, as well as cancer. It builds healthy bones, eyes, skin, and mucus membranes.	10 cal vitamins A, C iron, folate, calcium, potassium, manganese, magnesium, phosphorus, potassium, riboflavin, thiamin
 collard greens	Collard greens help lower LDL cholesterol, regulate blood sugar, and combat osteoporosis. It also boosts the immune system against viral and bacterial infection.	11 cal vitamins A, B6, C, E iron, folate, calcium, potassium, manganese, magnesium, phosphorus, potassium, riboflavin, thiamin
 spinach	Spinach improves red blood cell function, strengthens bones, regulates heart rate and blood pressure, and combats free radicals.	7 cal vitamins A, B6, C, E iron, folate, calcium, potassium, manganese, magnesium, phosphorus, potassium, riboflavin, thiamin
 iceberg	Although lowest of all leafy greens nutritionally, iceberg lettuce combats anemia, heart disease, and age-related illnesses.	8 cal vitamins A, C, E iron, folate, calcium, potassium, manganese, magnesium, phosphorus, potassium, riboflavin, thiamin
 swiss chard	Swiss chard helps maintain connective tissue, controls heart rate and blood pressure, as well as sugar levels. It prevents anemia and boosts immunity.	7 cal vitamins A, B6, C, E iron, folate, calcium, potassium, manganese, magnesium, phosphorus, potassium, riboflavin, thiamin
 kale	Kale is the most nutrient-dense green leafed vegetable. It aids in blood clotting, promotes healthy vision and retinal function, and fights cancer.	34 cal vitamins A, B6, C, E iron, folate, calcium, potassium, manganese, magnesium, phosphorus, potassium, riboflavin, thiamin
 turnip greens	Turnip greens enhance collagen synthesis, build healthy bones, combat anemia, and boost immune defenses against cancer and illness.	18 cal vitamins A, B6, C, E iron, folate, calcium, potassium, manganese, magnesium, phosphorus, potassium, riboflavin, thiamin

Greens and Your Lady Parts!

- Greens are very high in minerals such as calcium, magnesium, iron, potassium, phosphorous, zinc, vitamins A, B-complex, C, E and K – all essentials for optimal hormone production and regulation.
- Most of these green vegetables have Vitamin A, which is primarily responsible for healthy, smooth skin. It helps the follicles (which contain our eggs) in the ovaries mature each month in preparation for ovulation. It promotes the production of cervical fluid and improves its quality.
- Greens contain B vitamins, especially B6 and B9 (folate). Folate actually gets its name from the Latin word “folium”, which means leaf. Folate protects cervical cells and elevates mood by acting as a mild anti-depressant. Vitamin B6 in particular helps the liver break down and de-activate excess estrogen. Lack of B6 can cause irregular cycles, a progesterone deficiency, and poor egg quality. It can also help lengthen the luteal phase of your cycle and regulate blood sugar levels.
- All greens are crammed with fiber. When the liver breaks down excess estrogen, it is sent to the colon for removal. Eating more fiber encourages regular bowel movements, ensuring that the excess estrogen is removed from the body.
- Greens contain vitamin C, a powerful antioxidant that helps protect the DNA of eggs in the ovaries and the cells of the cervix thus reducing risk of cervical dysplasia and cervical cancer.
- Vitamin E is made up of compounds called tocopherols. This word literally means, “to bear offspring!” Studies have proven that without vitamin E, women are unable to reproduce.

Cruciferous Vegetables & Excess Estrogen

Excess estrogen can contribute to endometriosis, fibroids, PMS and other menstrual conditions. Cruciferous vegetables – arugula, bok choy, broccoli, brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, collard greens, kale, mustard greens, turnips and watercress – contain a high amount of the phytochemical called Indole-3-Carbinol (I3C). I3C breaks down into Diindolylmethane (DIM), which has been shown to increase estrogen metabolism and reduce estrogen levels in the body. It also decreases estrogen’s ability to bind to breast tissue, which significantly reduces cyclical breast pain and swelling.

Two Important Notes:

1. Cruciferous vegetables contain naturally occurring compounds called goitrogens. Goitrogens can interfere with the proper functioning of the thyroid gland. If you have hypothyroidism or a goiter, you should only eat these foods cooked, not raw, because cooking inhibits the goitrogenic effects of these foods.
2. Oxalic acid is a compound that occurs naturally in many foods including spinach and beet greens. It can bind to minerals such as calcium and magnesium in the digestive process and inhibit absorption of these minerals. I recommend cooking these types of greens to reduce the amount of oxalic acid.

Two Superstar Greens for Women's Health

Dandelion greens: Contains substantial amounts of vitamins A, C, D, and B-complex as well as zinc, magnesium, and potassium. Its high amount of potassium makes dandelion leaves (and root) one of the best diuretics – it alleviates bloating associated with PMS very effectively. It is also a powerful liver-detoxifier, which allows for increased de-activation and excretion of estrogen from the body, which is very important for women who have conditions caused by estrogen dominance.



Broccoli Sprouts: Have the highest concentration of a compound called sulforaphane, which has super anti-inflammatory powers. Sulforaphane basically causes cancer cells to commit suicide. It also helps prevent cancerous changes in your cells and changes the way your body uses estrogen, so that less of the hormone fuels conditions caused by excess estrogen. Studies show that sulforaphane literally stops breast and ovarian cancers (and other cancers) from forming and growing.



Other favorite green vegetables: Asparagus, beet greens, broccoli, broccoli raab, brussels sprouts, bok choy, Chinese cabbage, and endive.

Getting Enough of the Green Stuff

What defines a “regular intake” of greens?” It’s not the lettuce leaf on your veggie burger or the parsley garnish on your salmon, that’s for sure. Rather it’s a morning smoothie full of kale or spinach, a daily salad of mixed lettuce, or a good-sized portion of steamed or sautéed greens.

THE SECRET IS TO NO LONGER THINK OF GREENS AS A SIDE DISH BUT AS A MAIN DISH

Start with ½ a cup of any kind of greens a day and work up to 3 or 4 cups a day. That may seem like a lot but 3 cups is the amount of greens in those make-your-own salads. It takes time to train taste buds to love kale as much as cake so start small and don't get discouraged! Before long your cravings for the bad stuff will be replaced by cravings for energy and aliveness.

Cooking Greens

Try steaming, boiling, sautéing in coconut oil, water sautéing or lightly pickling, as in a pressed salad. If you boil your greens, do so for under a minute so that the nutrients in the greens do not get lost in the water. Boiling makes greens more soft and plump whereas steaming makes greens more fibrous and tight. Steaming is my favorite way to cook greens because it softens them up while still somewhat preserving their raw crunchiness.