Green Leafy Vegetables

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While there are plenty of people I know who say that chocolate is the only food group we need, reality reminds us that eating a variety of foods with different nutrients is necessary for good health. One food group that many Americans skimp on is the vegetable group, especially the dark green, leafy vegetables. Although young children often don't enjoy the strong taste of some deep green vegetables, serving them in a variety of ways can help them acquire a taste for these nutritional powerhouses.

As a group, the leafy greens are rich in vitamins A and C, dietary fiber, and the minerals iron and calcium (Center for Young Women's Health 2005). The benefits of including these vegetables in your diet are impressive. For example, research indicates that a diet rich in dark green leafy vegetables lowers the risk for a variety of cancers (American Institute for Cancer Research 2007).

Leafy greens include kale, collard greens, mustard greens, and spinach, just to name a few. Many of these vegetables have pungent tastes, which can be an intimidating flavor to some people. If taste is a factor, try various preparation methods, such as combining greens into pastas and casseroles, or serving with rice or potatoes to mellow the flavor. Spinach and arugula are delicious served raw in salads.

No matter how they are prepared, dark green leafy vegetables are a great nutritional boost to any diet. Green is one color you don't want to miss in your or your family's diet!
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References
