



KIDNEY-FRIENDLY SUPERFOODS

LEAFY GREENS

Leafy greens are edible plant leaves that we eat as a vegetable. Leafy greens are also called leaf vegetables, salad greens, vegetable greens, or simply greens. One cup of raw greens can range from 5–60 calories with 1–4 grams of fiber.

Why Are Leafy Greens a Superfood?

- Dark leafy greens such as salad greens, kale, and spinach are rich in vitamins A, C, E and K. Bok choy and mustard greens are also rich in many of the B-vitamins. They also contain iron, magnesium, potassium, calcium, and antioxidants
- Leafy greens are naturally low in calories and high in fiber
- They are available throughout the year in grocery stores and local farmers markets, or you can easily grow them in your garden
- There are many varieties and flavors that you can use in many ways, such as in salads, soups, stir fry, etc.

Leafy Greens and Kidney Disease

Leafy greens are rich in potassium, which you may need to watch with kidney disease. The amount of potassium you can have each day will depend on your stage of kidney disease or the type of dialysis you receive.

CHRONIC KIDNEY DISEASE (CKD)/TRANSPLANT

Most people with CKD do not have to limit leafy greens because of potassium. If your laboratory results show higher levels of potassium, your

doctor or kidney dietitian may talk with you about how much to eat. People with kidney transplants should wash greens thoroughly.

HEMODIALYSIS (3 TIMES/WEEK)

Potassium can be a concern for some leafy greens. How you cook your leafy greens can make a difference in the amount of potassium and other nutrients. For example, raw spinach can cook down to a much smaller amount, so 1 cup raw has less potassium than 1 cup cooked.

DAILY HOME AND NOCTURNAL HEMODIALYSIS/ PERITONEAL DIALYSIS

These types of dialysis can remove more potassium, so you may need to eat more potassium rich foods. Leafy green vegetables are a good way to add extra potassium to your diet and decrease the need to take an additional potassium pill.

KIDNEY STONES

If you are a calcium oxalate stone former, talk with your doctor or kidney dietitian about the need to limit oxalates. Spinach and Swiss chard are high in oxalates.

Potassium Levels in Common Leafy Greens

LOW POTASSIUM	MEDIUM POTASSIUM	HIGH POTASSIUM
Green Cabbage (raw)	Kale (boiled)	Bok Choy (boiled)
Kale (raw)	Mustard Greens (boiled)	Beet Greens (boiled)
Lettuce (raw)	Red Cabbage (raw)	Spinach (boiled, canned, frozen)
Napa Cabbage (cooked)	Spinach (raw) Spinach (raw)	Turnip Greens (boiled)

Delicious Leafy Green Recipe

FRESH SUMMER SALAD

MAKES 4 SERVINGS

- 1 small head bibb or butter lettuce, torn
- 6-8 strawberries, sliced
- 1 (11 ounce) can mandarin oranges, chilled and drained
- 1 small purple onion, sliced in rings
- 1/4 cup toasted slivered almonds
- 1/4 cup parmesan cheese, shredded
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 2 Tablespoons balsamic vinegar
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 1/8 teaspoon pepper

INSTRUCTIONS

- Combine salad ingredients in a large salad bowl.
- Combine dressing ingredients: olive oil, balsamic vinegar, sugar, and pepper in a jar. Cover lightly and shake until mixed well.
- Pour mixture over salad, toss gently to coat.
- Serve immediately.
- Tips: Switch out the lettuce for other leafy greens if you need more potassium. Add 3 ounce of grilled chicken for added protein.

NUTRITION FACTS (PER SERVING)

Calories..... 250	Fat 2 g
Carbohydrates..... 14 g	Sodium..... 95 mg
Protein..... 5 g	Potassium 265 mg
Dietary Fiber 20 g	Phosphorus..... 104 mg



For more information, contact the National Kidney Foundation

Toll-free help line: **855.NKF.CARES** or email: nkfcare@kidney.org

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