



The Goodness of Greens

Table of contents

1. [Importance of green leafy vegetables](#)
2. [Nutritive value of some of the commonly eaten greens](#)
3. [Related resources](#)

Importance of green leafy vegetables



- Green leafy vegetables are vital for growth and good health as they contain all important nutrients.
- In India, a wide range of greens are consumed. The most popular ones being Spinach, Amaranth, Gogu, Fenugreek, Drumstick leaves, Mint etc.,
- Leafy vegetables are particularly rich in mineral nutrient and iron. Iron deficiency leads to anaemia, a common health problem among pregnant and lactating women and also children.
- Inclusion of greens in daily diet would help prevent anaemia and promote good health.
- Green leafy vegetables are also a rich source of Calcium, Beta carotene and Vitamin C.
- In India, nearly 30,000 children under five years of age go blind every year due to Vitamin A deficiency. Carotene in greens gets converted in the body to form Vitamin A which prevents blindness.
- To preserve Vitamin C content in greens, prolonged cooking should be avoided, as this nutrient, which keeps gums in good condition is lost on overcooking.
- Greens also contain some of the B-Complex Vitamins.

The recommended dietary allowance of green leafy vegetables for an adult women is 100g/day, adult man 40g/day, preschool children (4-6 yrs) and for boys and girls beyond 10 yrs of age it is 50g/day.

Nutritive value of some of the commonly eaten greens

Nutrients	Mint	Amaranth	Spinach	Drumstick Leaves	Coriander leaves	Gogu
Calories	48	45	26	92	44	56
Protein (g)	4.8	4.0	2.0	6.7	3.3	1.7
Calcium (mg)	200	397	73	440	184	1720
Iron (mg)	15.6	25.5	10.9	7.0	18.5	2.28
Carotene (microg)	1620	5520	5580	6780	6918	2898
Thiamine (mg)	0.05	0.03	0.03	0.06	0.05	0.07
Riboflavin (mg)	0.26	0.30	0.26	0.06	0.06	0.39
Vitamin C (mg)	27.0	99	28	220	135	20.2

- It is generally believed that greens cause diarrhea in children. So most mothers abstain from giving this nutritious food stuff to their children. Several bacteria/germs/insects and other extraneous matter contaminate greens through water and soil. And if not washed

properly, they may cause diarrhea on consumption. All greens must be washed thoroughly under running water to eradicate such contaminants and thereby prevent diarrhea.

- Infants should be served greens only after they have been cooked, mashed and sieved so as to remove the fibrous part. To retain the nutritive value of greens, excessive or overcooking must be avoided; also the water obtained from the greens on cooking must not be thrown away. Always ensure the vessel in which greens are cooked is covered with a lid. Do not dry the leaves in the sun as carotene will be lost. Avoid frying greens.
- The nutritive value of greens should not be judged by its cost, which most people wrongly do and discard them as inferior foodstuff. For although inexpensive, greens are highly nutritious and required by all.
- Cultivation of green leafy vegetables should be encouraged, so that, they will be available all through the year. Kitchen gardens, roof gardens, school gardens etc., are ideal for growing green leafy vegetables. Use of green leaves from trees like drumstick, agathi etc., helps to obtain them regularly without much effort, once a tree is planted in the backyard.

Source: [National Institute of Nutrition, Hyderabad](#) 

Related resources

- [Nutrition and Health](#) 

Source: https://data.vikaspedia.in/short/lc?k=2EWymNpo_tc5MmR4LSGDqQ

