

Recipe for healthy garlic: Crush before cooking

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"Stop and smell the garlic — that's all you have to do," advised William Shatner, whose starring roles ranged from Captain Kirk in *Star Trek* to himself in *Iron Chef USA*. New scientific research is editing Shatner's advice for the millions of people seeking garlic's fabulous flavor and its reputed health benefits. Make it read: Stop and crush the garlic.

Claudio R. Galmarini and colleagues in Argentina and the United States are reporting new evidence that crushing garlic before cooking can reduce the loss of garlic's healthful properties.

In a report scheduled for the March 7 edition of ACS' *Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry* they note that many past studies of garlic and health used raw garlic. The new study joins a handful or others to examine how the heat of cooking affects the chemical compounds associated with garlic's beneficial health effects.

The researchers found that even a few minutes of cooking reduces levels of those compounds. The reduction is steepest in whole garlic, and less pronounced in garlic that has been crushed before cooking. Crushing or chopping garlic releases an enzyme, alliinase, that catalyzes the formation of allicin, which then breaks down to form a variety of healthful organosulfur compounds.

The researchers believe that crushing garlic before cooking may allow alliinase to work before cooking inactivates the enzyme. Their report notes that allowing crushed garlic to stand for 10 minutes before cooking

may further enhance formation of those compounds before heat inactivates alliinase.

Source: ACS

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