

Eating clean by going green this spring

March 5 2013

The energetic and radiant hue of emerald green has been declared the spring color of 2013. While green shirts, pants and jackets will be seen everywhere this season, so should green food on your plate.

Bright emerald green is symbolic of spring and food bursting with flavor and nutrients.

"You will be well on your way to spring "cleaning" your diet by incorporating these free-radical absorbing foods," said Kari Kooi, a registered dietitian at The Methodist Hospital in Houston. "Eating clean is a buzzword for a wholesome, unprocessed diet that drastically limits ultra-processed foods made from inferior ingredients while embracing whole foods like [fruits and vegetables](#),"

Here are five green powerhouse foods to help stylize your plate:

- **Asparagus:** Looking for a natural anti-ager? Emerging in the springtime, these green spears offer a bounty of nutrients. Asparagus is high in glutathione, an antioxidant that can help reduce [skin damage](#) from the sun. Additionally, asparagus contains the most folate of any vegetable. [Folate](#) plays a vital role in heart health and the prevention of birth defects.
- **Avocado:** Add some thin slices of smooth avocado to your sandwich or salad without feeling guilty. The monounsaturated fat in avocado is what's mostly responsible for avocado's super food status. This type of happy fat can help drive down levels of

[bad cholesterol](#).

- **Brussels Sprouts:** These baby cabbages are loaded with antioxidants and filling fiber. A cruciferous vegetable, Brussels sprouts contain powerful, cancer-fighting [sulfur compounds](#) that are responsible for their pungent aroma. These [green vegetables](#) take on a whole new flavor and crispy texture when roasted in the oven.
- **Kale:** This beautiful ruffled green is being called "the queen of greens." Kale is brimming with eye-nourishing carotenoids lutein and zeaxanthin, a pair of [phytochemicals](#) that has been shown to prevent macular degeneration and cataracts. Additionally, kale is a better source of calcium than spinach as it has lower levels of oxalic acid, a compound that interferes with calcium absorption.
- **Kiwifruit:** Rich in vitamin C, potassium and fiber, kiwis make a perfect portable snack. Just slice a kiwifruit in half and scoop out the emerald flesh with a spoon. This sweet and tart fruit has a unique taste, with flavors reminiscent of strawberry, banana, melon, pineapple, and citrus.

"For your health this season, go ahead and add splashes of green to your plate as well as your wardrobe," Kooi said.

Provided by The Methodist Hospital System

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