

Don't throw out old, sprouting garlic—it has heart-healthy antioxidants

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old garlic bulbs with bright green shoots emerging from the cloves—is considered to be past its prime and usually ends up in the garbage can. But scientists are reporting in ACS' *Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry* that this type of garlic has even more heart-healthy antioxidant activity than its fresher counterparts.

Jong-Sang Kim and colleagues note that people have used garlic for medicinal purposes for thousands of years. Today, people still celebrate its healthful benefits. Eating garlic or taking garlic supplements is touted as a natural way to reduce [cholesterol levels](#), blood pressure and [heart disease risk](#). It even may boost the immune system and help fight cancer. But those benefits are for fresh, raw garlic. Sprouted garlic has received much less attention. When seedlings grow into green plants, they make many new compounds, including those that protect the young plant against pathogens. Kim's group reasoned that the same thing might be happening when green shoots grow from old heads of garlic. Other studies have shown that sprouted beans and grains have increased [antioxidant activity](#), so the team set out to see if the same is true for garlic.

They found that garlic sprouted for five days had higher antioxidant activity than fresher, younger bulbs, and it had different metabolites, suggesting that it also makes different substances. Extracts from this garlic even protected cells in a laboratory dish from certain types of damage. "Therefore, sprouting may be a useful way to improve the antioxidant potential of garlic," they conclude.

Provided by American Chemical Society

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