

DON'T FORGET YOUR GREENS

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WE'RE NOT MEETING THE SUGGESTED DAILY INTAKE OF FRUITS AND VEGGIES

We all know that fruits and vegetables are good for us. Most of us were told by our mothers to eat our veggies throughout our childhood, and have been told the same thing by doctors, nutritionists, and other health professionals through our adult life. Unfortunately most of us only consume a fraction of the fruits and vegetables we all know we should. In fact on average we are only consuming 1/3 of the recommended daily intake suggested by nutritionists. With our fast paced lives and our go-go-go attitude, we frequently neglect to include the important life sustaining nutrients found in fruits and vegetables, and opt instead for fast foods that are overly processed and lacking in nutrients. By neglecting to consume sufficient amounts of fruits and veggies we are predisposing ourselves to a greater risk of cancer, heart disease, rapid ageing, memory impairment, acid alkaline imbalance, and many other conditions to numerous to list. Simply consuming adequate amounts of fruits and vegetables will go a long way in dramatically reducing the risk of numerous negative health conditions. Including a nutrient rich greens supplement as part of our daily routine can act as an insurance policy; providing all the protective power of fresh fruits and veggies, plus a whole lot more.

GREEN FOOD SUPPLEMENTS AS ANTI-OXIDANTS

The negative aspects of our modern lifestyle, which include environmental toxins, dietary imbalances, and stress, all contribute to excessive production of free radicals by our own bodies. Although free radical production is a natural process that occurs in all of us, the concern lies in how many we produce as well as how effectively our bodies can neutralize them. Free radicals are molecules, usually of oxygen, that have lost an electron.

That loss makes them unstable (in chemical terms, reactive), so they try to take electrons from other molecules within the body, which causes damage at the cellular level. Unless kept in check excessive free radical production and exposure can speed up the ageing process, disrupt immune function, and cause genetic mutations to cells that can then become cancerous. In fact free radicals have been implicated in many of today's common afflictions. Even conditions that you might not associate with free radical production like crohn's, ulcerative colitis, and chronic fatigue syndrome have been linked to excess free radicals. The vital job of neutralizing free radicals goes to antioxidants. Antioxidants protect cells from the destructive nature of free radicals, making consumption of antioxidant-rich foods and supplements critical. Choosing a greens product that contains a broad spectrum of potent anti-oxidants such as extracts of green tea and grapeseed, as well as bilberry, lycopene, lutein, and resveratrol, to name just a few, will help to ensure that the body is equipped to defend against excessive free radicals.

MAINTAINING A HEALTHY ACID ALKALINE BALANCE

The foods we consume also have an impact on the delicate acid/alkaline balance of our bodies. Foods like meat, sugar, alcohol, coffee, and table salt, and factors like stress, and certain disease states tend to increase the level of acidity within our bodies. By contrast, most fruits, land and sea vegetables, herbs and spices

are alkalizing, which can help to bring our systems back into balance. One can measure one's acidity or alkalinity by purchasing pH paper and measuring urinary pH. The suggested ratio of alkalizing to acid forming foods is 80:20. Regrettably many of us are nowhere near this ideal ratio. Being too acidic increases your risk of cancer, allows many pathogenic (disease causing) organisms to thrive, and provides an ideal environment for conditions such as arthritis and osteoporosis. An increased risk of osteoporosis is associated with acidity because the body naturally tries to rebalance itself by drawing calcium (which is alkaline) from the bones to buffer the acidity. Bone formation and breakdown is controlled by two main cell-types, which respond to acid/alkaline balance. One cell, known as an osteoclast, reabsorbs calcium from the bone, essentially "breaking down" bone. The other cell, known as an osteoblast, re-calcifies bone, essentially "building and repairing" it. In an acidic environment the activity of osteoclasts increases and that of osteoblasts decreases. Consequently we lower bone mineral density and increase the risk of osteoporosis. Foods have differing abilities to alkalize. The ability for foods to impact acid alkaline balance can be measured through their Potential Renal Acid Load (PRAL). The PRAL values for foods vary from moderately alkalizing to very alkalizing. Once again, green food supplements tend to be very alkalizing, and will do much to offset the impact of an overly acidic diet.

One popular diet in particular has been under increased scrutiny due to its potential for increasing the risk of osteoporosis. Some evidence suggests that the current craze for low carb-high protein-high fat diets may increase osteoporosis risk. Of particular concern is the large quantity of meat protein, and reduced quantities of fruits and vegetables that many "low carbers" consume. Having large quantities of acid forming meats in the absence of alkalizing fruits and veggies can especially predispose many dieters to a greater risk of osteoporosis.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN YOUR GREENS FORMULA

We are all aware that we so seldom consume the suggested number of servings of fruits and vegetables recommended to maintain optimal health. Consequently we need to look at ways of still getting all the important phytonutrients (plant nutrients), antioxidants, and alkalizing properties that fruits and veggies possess. One solution is the consumption of a quality green food supplement that is rich in all of these substances. Green food supplements typically come in both powder and capsule form. The powder can be added to juice or water and is best taken first thing in the morning. If you have never taken a greens supplement before the rich green colour of the drink may throw you, but the deepness of the colour is a great indication of the nutrients you are getting. A single serving of a quality greens formula is equivalent to six to eight servings of fruits and veggies. Studies have shown that the antioxidant capacity of land and sea vegetables, and herbs is actually greater when properly dried and powdered than when in its original raw form. This is because much of the volume of the plant is made up of water and when the water is removed properly the nutrient value is not only maintained it is also greatly concentrated in its potency.