

## Eating Leafy Greens With Certain Health Conditions and Medications

Eating a wide variety of fruits and vegetables is one of the best ways to nourish your body and protect yourself against chronic disease! However, certain medications or medical conditions may change the way that your body responds to these healthy, nourishing ingredients, particularly leafy green vegetables (such as swiss chard, kale, or spinach). It is important to talk to your doctor before making any major changes to your diet, especially if you are currently taking medications or have certain health conditions (described below).

### Vitamin K & Blood Thinners

Most healthy adults should aim for 90 mcg of Vitamin K per day, which can easily be done by eating a variety of leafy green vegetables each week. However, vitamin K can interact with certain medications, such as blood thinning drugs (like Coumadin). If you are on any medications, talk with your doctor to determine an appropriate amount of green vegetables for you.

In most cases, your doctor won't ask you to avoid leafy green vegetables. Rather, she will want to make sure that your intake is consistent, and that your medication dosage is appropriate for your diet. To get an idea of how much vitamin K is in certain foods, as well as the foods you might want to discuss with your doctor, see the guidelines below from the [Cleveland Clinic](http://www.clevelandclinic.com) for people on blood thinners:

#### Limit to no more than 3 servings per day

Food	Serving Size	Vitamin K (mcg)
Broccoli	cooked 1 cup	220
Brussels sprouts	cooked 1 cup	219
Mustard greens	cooked 1/2 cup	210
Collards	raw 1 cup	184
Spinach	raw 1 cup	145
Turnip greens	raw 1 cup	138
Endive	raw 1 cup	116
Broccoli	raw 1 cup	89
Cabbage	cooked 1/2 cup	82
Green leaf lettuce	1 cup	71

#### Limit to no more than 1 serving per day

Food	Serving Size	Vitamin K (mcg)
Kale	cooked 1/2 cup	531
Spinach	cooked 1/2 cup	444
Collards	cooked 1/2 cup	418
Swiss chard	raw 1 cup	299
Swiss chard	cooked 1/2 cup	287
Mustard greens	raw 1 cup	279
Turnip greens	cooked 1/2 cup	265
Parsley	raw 1/4 cup	246

### **Kidney Stones, Oxalosis, & Hyperoxaluria**

Most healthy bodies can easily digest foods and deliver the nutrients to where they are needed. However, people that suffer from a certain type of kidney stone (calcium oxalate kidney stones) or conditions like oxalosis or hyperoxaluria (which are rare kidney disorders) may have trouble breaking down some of the components found in certain “oxalate forming” foods (beets, spinach, rhubarb, strawberries, nuts, chocolate, tea, wheat bran and all dry beans, excluding lima and green beans).

This means that people who suffer from kidney stones or more severe conditions like oxalosis or hyperoxaluria may need to be mindful of their intake of certain leafy greens as well—especially spinach. If you’ve experienced any of these conditions, it is important to talk to your doctor to find out if you need to avoid any foods.

### **Health Through Heritage**

If you are inspired by this program, and you would like to change your diet, let your physician know so that she can help you transition to a healthier lifestyle *safely*. Most medications can be adjusted to accommodate for an increase in leafy green vegetable consumption.

With all of this information, it is important to remember that the high level of chronic disease in the United States certainly isn’t from eating too much kale and spinach! Hopefully, with time, by embracing this traditional, healthy way of eating, you will see health changes that allow you to enjoy more and more greens, and be a happier, healthier you.

