

THE GOODNESS OF GREEN SMOOTHIES

By Dawn Balusik, AP, DOM, LMT

www.AcupunctureByDawn.com

We all know we need to be eating our greens. But, let's face it, how many of us are getting even 2 servings of dark green leafy veggies per day, much less the recommended 4 to 5 or more? Okay, let's back up a minute, why are greens so good for us anyway?

It turns out that green "leafies" are actually one of the BEST foods for human beings! Why? Lots of reasons, not the least of which is that our closest DNA relatives, the chimpanzees, have a diet that is more than 50% greens. Why should we care about that? Because chimps are over 95% genetically the same as humans. It would make sense that our digestive systems and nutritional requirements would be very similar. Greens are full of live enzymes, vitamins, alkalizing minerals, antioxidants, fiber, amino acids and chlorophyll.

Chlorophyll is what makes the leaf green and, interestingly, the chlorophyll molecule is only slightly different from the hemoglobin molecule (the molecule in human blood that carries oxygen to all of our body cells). Chlorophyll is known to stop yeast and fungus growth in the digestive tract, counteract toxins and radiation, de-activate many carcinogens, counteract inflammation, and promote healthful intestinal flora.

Greens help nourish and strengthen every organ system, as well as detoxify and heal the body. They help us gain energy, cut cravings and prevent diseases such as cancer, diabetes, heart disease and arthritis. (Maybe those chimps are on to something!)

In Oriental Medicine, greens are said to build blood and improve Liver function, resulting

in greater energy, more luxurious hair, nails and skin, and better health in general.

So, how do we get more greens into our diet easily? The answer is Green Smoothies. They are tasty, and, since they are blended, they are easier to digest than whole leaves. I've been making green smoothies for myself and my husband for 5 months now, and love them. I feel cleaner, lighter and more energetic, and my husband has noticed a marked decrease in his cravings for sweets.

There are many green smoothie recipes, but I will give you my version. I put about 8 to 12 oz of filtered water into a blender, add fruit (lately I've been using a banana and a cup of any kind of berries, but you can use any kind of fruit...get creative!) and add 2 handfuls of greens (I usually mix 2 varieties of greens, such as spinach and kale, romaine and swiss chard, or escarole and leaf lettuce). Blend it all together until smooth and drink! No need for sugar, sweeteners or dairy products. The fruit makes it sweet, and the greens make it VERY nutritious! For a thicker smoothie, simply add more banana. Simple and Yummy. Try to drink 3 to 4 cups per day.

Be sure to change up your greens every few days, so your body doesn't get bored of the same greens, and so that you can benefit from the nutrition in a variety of greens. Oh, and skip the iceberg lettuce since it has significantly fewer nutrients compared to the darker leaves.

Lastly, try to use organic produce when possible. Organic food is less toxic, because it doesn't contain the pesticides that conventionally grown produce does. And organic farming practices help replenish the soil of vital nutrients, which means that organic food is more nutritious than conventionally grown food.

You can learn more and find more recipes at

<http://www.vegetarianbaby.com/articles/rawgreensmoothies.shtml>

Or check out the book Green for Life, by Victoria Boutenko.

