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Summer Greens That Are Packed with Protein



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Summer is a great time of the year to tap into all the available organic vegetables from the local farmers' markets. Beyond the obvious benefits of drinking your greens, vegetables contain protein that supports our bodies.

Did you know that your dry body is made up of about 40 percent protein? These warm summer days allow us to be outdoors enjoying nature and sports, so while you are biking, hiking, swimming,

walking, playing tennis or golf, vegetables are your friends because they are important in the repair and growth of our muscles, bones, ligaments, tissues and even hair, skin and nails.

And protein boosts our immune system and helps our body fight infection while maintaining bodily functions such as digestion, metabolism and circulation. Here are some protein-packing vegetables: spinach, kale, asparagus, cauliflower, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, artichoke, watercress, green peas and green beans. According to the National Institutes of Health, some other top plant sources of protein include:

- almonds
- black beans
- garbanzo beans
- hazelnuts

- kidney beans
- lentils
- peanut butter
- peanuts
- pinto beans
- split peas
- sunflower seeds
- tempeh
- tofu
- walnuts

How much protein we need has been debated for years, and because it is a building block for optimum health, this discussion will continue. Most people think of cheese, meat and eggs when protein becomes the topic of conversation, but did you know that all whole foods contain protein? They include foods like blueberries, bananas and salad. It is also becoming more common to see elite athletes on plant-based diets.

I say, make some room for those yummy, summer vegetables in your picnic baskets,

at sunset dinners at the beach, and at breakfast time. You might be surprised at how good you feel and how good they taste when sautéed, grilled, steamed, added to salads or topped with nuts, quinoa (another complete protein), lemon and basil.

Happy summer everyone, and remember... seek and find ways to be good to your body, mind and spirit as you enjoy the lazy days of August.

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