

Greens Nutrition Powder DIY – Could This Replace Our Veggies?

Vegetables are an important part of our diet, but are they really that important?

Yes.

Skip to How To Make Your Own Greens Powder

The evidence for why we should eat more vegetables keeps on growing. A lower incidence of cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, stroke, eye disease, asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, osteoporosis, and many forms of cancer are all associated with higher vegetable consumption.

Even with all of the evidence supporting the fact that increasing your vegetable consumption is one of the best things you can do for your health, 87% of the United States population did not meet vegetable intake recommendations from 2007 to 2010. This percentage is based on the CDC recommendation to eat two to three cups of vegetables daily, an amount you can easily eat in one meal if you have two sides of vegetables, and only 13% of the population was able to do it.

But that was back before 2010, things must have changed for the better, right?

In a study conducted by the Produce for Better Health Foundation, they found that vegetable and fruit consumption has declined by 7% from 2009 to 2014. They are expecting a growth in vegetable and fruit consumption by 4% in the next 5 years, but an important question still remains. Why are we still struggling to eat more vegetables?

Human Nature Trumps Logic

It doesn't matter how much evidence supports a specific lifestyle change, humans will always crave certainty and simplicity. Why bother to use fresh produce and spend precious time making something that you and your family may not like when you can get a pre-made meal?

Even though many other factors are involved in our behavior, it is important to recognize that our brains tend to value simplicity and certainty over logic and evidence. Our brains are just not made to handle the complexities of life, but they do know what tastes good and what feels good and would much rather stick to that.

This is part of the reason why most of us will revert back to our old habits after starting a new diet. It doesn't mean you have a lack of discipline or that you will never be healthy, it simply means that you are fighting against human nature, and human nature always wins, eventually. The key to adopting a healthy lifestyle is to make human nature work for you, not against you.

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Making Health Easy

71% of American adults consume supplements daily, which is much higher than the 13% who consume two to three cups of vegetables daily. This statistic is a stunningly accurate depiction of human nature. Even without evidence to back up the claims of most supplements, we gravitate toward them like flies to a fly trap. Supplements are so irresistible because, when they work, they make health easier. All you have to do is swallow a capsule and you magically heal your joints or cure your inflammation. Everyone will sign up for that!

Quality supplements are a win-win for your mind and body and a great way to make human nature work for you, not against you. However, it is impossible to take supplements that contain all the benefits and nutrition that are found in fruits and vegetables. The whole vegetable is more nutritious than the sum of its parts, especially when those parts are heavily processed to form a supplement.

But what about greens powder supplements? Over the past decade, green nutrition powder supplements have exploded onto the supplement scene, challenging our definition of what a “whole food” really is.

An Easy Way to Get Your Vegetables?

Vegetable dehydration has been used by humans for hundreds, if not thousands, of years to keep the food from spoiling and maintain the integrity of most of its nutrients. If you then put those dehydrated vegetables into a high-speed blender, you will have a greens powder that is easier to consume than a fast food meal and much healthier than not having any quality produce at all.

Before you order a container of greens powder, you must know that nearly one-third of greens powder supplements don't live up to their dietary claims and may actually be harmful, according to a report from ConsumerLab.com. One of the supplements mentioned in this report was Vibrant Health's “Green Vibrance” product, which contained roughly 24 micrograms of the carcinogen arsenic per .4-ounce serving. This far exceeds the 10-mcg-per-34-ounce safety limit established by the Environmental Protection Agency.

This doesn't mean that you should disregard all greens powder supplements. The same ConsumerLab.com report found that Green Max Powder from Swanson and Juice Plus+ Garden Blend capsules are trustworthy and safe products.

High-quality greens powders still will not have the same benefits as eating whole fruits and vegetables. This is partly because light, air, and heat exposure can render some of the vitamins and other nutrients in fruits and vegetables useless to our body. And there is no way of guaranteeing that the supplement you are taking hasn't been exposed to too much light, air, or heat, rendering vulnerable vitamins like C, E, K, A, B-6, and B-12 inactive.

Even if some of the vitamins are destroyed during processing, greens powders will still contain many of the same nutrients and antioxidants that you will find in whole vegetables, making this one of the few supplements capable of living up to its health claims. The only way to ensure that you have a nutritious greens powder that lives up to the hype is by making it yourself. It is a simple and easy way to promote your health and the health of the environment.

The Power of Making Your Own Greens Supplement

In the United States, 30 to 40 percent of the food supply is made up of food waste, and edible food scraps like carrot greens, beet greens, and greens that are not "perfect" make up a portion of this food waste. Carrot greens and beet greens are as nutritious as the carrots and beets that we eat, but what are you supposed to do with them? And what can you do with the leftover greens before they go bad?

Dehydrate them and blend them into a fine powder, and you will have your own nutrient-packed greens powder that helps you and the environment.

How To Make Your Own Greens Powder

You don't need a laboratory to make your own greens powder – all you need is greens, a source of consistent dry heat, and a

high-speed blender.

Step 1

Gather all the greens that will not make it into your meals. Beet greens, carrot greens, spinach, kale, arugula, chard, lettuce, and even sprouts like broccoli sprouts will be perfect additions to your greens powder.

Tip: blanching your leafy greens for four minutes will help to increase the shelf-life of your greens powder, but it comes with the risk of destroying some vitamins. Personally, I have never blanched my greens before dehydrating them, and they have kept well for over 3 months. However, it is important to mention that I have no way of measuring their quality other than smell and taste.

Step 2

Rinse and lay your greens out so that they have consistent ventilation and exposure to heat. This is harder to do by sun drying or using the oven, so it is best to use a dehydrator.

Tip: Make sure your vegetables are dehydrating in an environment with lower humidity. More moisture means longer dehydrating times and a greater chance of spoilage.

Product Suggestion: The Nesco FD-75A Snackmaster Pro Food Dehydrator is a reliable dehydrator that I have used for almost two years without any problems. Its lowest setting is 95 degrees Fahrenheit, so it ensures that the vitamins will not be denatured by heat.

Step 3

Let the vegetables dehydrate at temperatures around 100 degrees Fahrenheit to preserve their vitamins.

Take them out of the dehydrator when they are completely dry

and crisp to the touch.

This may take between 12 and 72 hours depending on the quantity and type of greens you are dehydrating.

Tip: If you are dehydrating greens with the stems attached, it will take about 12-24 hours longer for the stem to fully dry.

Step 4

Take your dehydrated greens, put them in a blender, blend them into a fine powder.

Tip: Add powdered stevia if you'd like to give it a sweeter taste.

Product Suggestion: The NutriBullet works really well for making greens powder.

Step 5

You now have your own greens powder!

Store it in a glass container in a dry environment.

Tip: Store it in a tinted jar, like a Miron violet glass jar, to protect it from light damage. You can also add a silicone moisture packet to ensure that moisture doesn't spoil your powder.

The Easiest Way to Supplement Your Diet With More Vegetables

Now you have your own homemade greens powder with (almost) all of the vitamins and antioxidants intact, along with some of the enzymes and phytonutrients. Add a tablespoon or two of your homemade greens powder to soups, salads, dressings, sauces, or smoothies. With just one tablespoon, you will supplement your meal with almost two cups of vegetables

without any extra preparation. Then add in these salad and lemonade recipes into your life and see how that feels.

Related Reading:

- *Total Nutrition – Make your own Homemade Multivitamin and Mineral Formula*
- *Invasive Weeds You Can, and Should, Be Eating – Easy Foraging*
- *Diatomaceous Earth – Mother Nature’s Secret Weapon: What Is It, How to Use It, Where to Find It*

Sources:

- *All About Fruits & Vegetables – Precision Nutrition*
- *Adults Meeting Fruit and Vegetable Intake Recommendations – CDC*
- *State of The Plate – Produce for Better Health Foundation*
- *Effect of drying methods on the quality characteristics of dill (*Anethum graveolens*) greens – ScienceDirect*
- *Your Green Drink: More Hazard Than Health? – Prevention*
- *Frequently Asked Questions – USDA*
- *Effects of cooking on vitamins – Beyond Veg*
- *Fruit and vegetable consumption and mortality from all causes, cardiovascular disease, and cancer: systematic review and dose-response meta-analysis of prospective cohort studies – The BMJ*