



HEALTHY LIVING SECTION

Weekly tips and advice from your neighborhood Carolinas HealthCare System Blue Ridge providers.



Meet the Leafy Greens You Have to Eat to Believe

No longer just a trend, microgreens continue to grow in popularity because of their status as true powerhouses of the superfood circuit.

Grown for about a week, microgreens are essentially tiny vegetables that barely have their first set of leaves. There are several types – red cabbage, broccoli, even popcorn shoots – and they’re all as good for you as they are flavorful.

Even though these amazing little plants have been around for decades, more and more people are starting to put microgreens on their plates because they do more than just satisfy one’s palate.

Packed With Flavorful Nutrients

Chefs have used microgreens for years but they’ve become increasingly popular because of their proven health benefits.

The United States Department of Agriculture in 2014 released several reports on the nutritional analysis of microgreens in which researchers found that some varieties contain significantly more nutrients than their adult counterparts.

Microgreens are little nutritional powerhouses, having four to six times the amount of certain nutrients – like vitamins A, C, E and K – compared to the adult version of the plant. Like other fruits and vegetables, they begin to lose their nutritional value after harvest, so the fresher the better.

Decorate Your Diet

Microgreens are a great addition to the other veggies you eat. Each variety carries its own unique flavor, color, shape – and they are all easily digestible because they lack the fiber and calories of mature vegetables. But it’s their zesty taste that’s sure to win you over.

Sprinkle them on top of soup or a salad, or put them on sandwiches or in smoothies to enhance flavor and nutritional content – but don’t cook them, as microgreens are best eaten raw.

Tiny But Potent

Some types of microgreens can help reduce inflammation, prevent cardiovascular disease, fight cancer and boost your immune system. About an ounce of micro red cabbage – enough to fill the palm of your hand – delivers about the same amount of nutrients as a head of mature red cabbage, according to USDA research.

Chicken Noodle Soup

- 2 pounds of organic skinless chicken breasts or thighs (salt before adding to crockpot)
- 2 (32 ounce) boxes of organic chicken or vegetable broth
- 6 stalks of chopped celery
- 2 diced yellow onions
- 6 carrots diced
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 2 bay leaves
- 2 teaspoons dried parsley
- 1 package gluten-free noodles or rice

Add all of the ingredients to the crockpot and set on low for 6 to 8 hours. Remove and shred the chicken, then add it back to the crockpot. Add gluten-free noodles or rice for the last 30 minutes of cooking.

Serves: 6 to 8



Chicken noodle soup can help soothe cold symptoms, like coughing, sneezing and a stuffy nose. It will also help keep you hydrated.

Paying to Lose

Programs like Weight Watchers and Jenny Craig have been shown to be effective, as well as a little easier, since meals or at least weekly plans are included. However, they can be considerably more expensive than other diets.



A New Diet in the New Year

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We are officially finished with 2016 (other than filing your taxes in the spring, of course), which means it is time to plan for healthy living in 2017. For many of us that means picking a new diet or resolving to stick with one that has worked in the past. When selecting a diet, you should choose one based on your health goals and meal plans that you will enjoy. To help you get started, here are a few of the best ones out there.

DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) – Excellent for people concerned with high blood pressure, the DASH diet focuses on food that has always been considered good for you: fruits, vegetables, lean protein and low-fat dairy. Foods to avoid include the usual suspects: high-calorie and high-fat sweets and red meat, while also reducing your salt intake. It’s perfectly acceptable to take it slow at first. Add some extra fruit and veggies here and there, while gradually eliminating the “bad for you” food, and you’ll be making progress.

MIND (Mediterranean-DASH Intervention for Neurodegenerative Delay) – As the name suggests, this diet is great for your brain. It is also one of the best heart-healthy diets. A combination of the top brain foods from the DASH diet and the Mediterranean, MIND puts an emphasis on green leafy vegetables, nuts, berries, whole grains, fish, poultry, olive oil, and wine. Red meats, butter and margarine, cheese, pastries and sweets, and fried or fast food are to be avoided entirely.

TLC (Therapeutic Lifestyle Changes) – Endorsed by the American Heart Association, the TLC diet aims to improve cholesterol numbers and promote overall heart health. This is achieved by reducing saturated fat and increasing fiber intake. The plan for meals each day is to limit meat to no more than five ounces of chicken, turkey or fish, consume two to three servings of low-fat or nonfat dairy, up to four servings of fruit and three to five of vegetables, and six to 11 servings of grains in the form of bread, cereal, rice and pasta, among others.

Exclusively following these diets should provide some of the benefits you are looking for. If weight loss is also a goal, and it should be, you will want to incorporate exercise into your New Year plans to maximize results. Before beginning a new diet or exercise routine, consult with your doctor and discuss your options, including daily calorie goals. If you have any questions, please call us at 828-580-6600.

