

OPTIMAL HEALTH UNIVERSITY™

Presented by Dr. Wayne Terai

Savor Spring Vegetables

Spring is in the air! For many of us, that means that fresh, local produce is available once again. Eating locally is ideal for the environment and optimal nutrition, so be sure to take advantage of these early spring treats. To keep you motivated to incorporate more spring vegetables into your diet, Dr. Terai has “dug up” exciting new research about their powerful health benefits.



sands of miles to get there — using vast amounts of fossil fuels.

Stopping at your local farmstand, or your own backyard, is a much more health- and earth-friendly option.

Why Go Local?

There's lots of buzz lately about “eating local.” Why bother eating local, seasonal produce when you can get a vast array of produce any time in the grocery store? Is going local really that important? In a word, yes.

genetic modification and other controversial methods. These fruits and vegetables may contain lower levels of nutrients, compared with their locally grown counterparts.

In addition, much of the produce you see in the grocery store travelled thou-

Artichokes and Liver Health

Artichokes are packed with fiber, potassium, calcium, iron, phosphorus and other essential minerals — so they are flush with health benefits. But they are perhaps best known for their effect on liver health. Specifically, they have been associated with promoting liver health, particularly among heavy alcohol drinkers, people exposed to other toxins and those with compromised liver function.

Buying from a local, trusted source is vastly better for both your health and the health of our planet. Eating food grown nearby reduces the number of paths the food must travel and, hence, the chances of contamination. Smaller, local farms, even non-organic ones, are also less likely to douse their crops with pesticides. Plus, produce at a traditional grocery store is more likely to have been subjected to irradiation,



Weekly Wellness Research Education From Dr. Wayne Terai

If you are interested in learning about wellness and nutrition research, you have come to the right place! We are committed to providing patients with the latest cutting-edge research in chiropractic wellness and related fields, such as nutrition, stress reduction, environmental influences on health, exercise and how one's attitude affects well-being.

To this end, each week Dr. Terai presents a new, hot-off-the-presses *Optimal Health University™* topic. This office is focused on teaching our patients and community about this vital health information, which will jump-start them on the road to wellness. To find out more about this revolutionary approach to patient education, or to suggest future *Optimal Health University™* topics, please call our office today!

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For instance, a recent study in the journal *Experimental and Toxicologic Pathology* found that rats given artichoke extract were protected against liver damage after being exposed to hazardous chemicals. Rats exposed to the chemical but not the artichoke did not enjoy the same liver protection (*Exp Toxicol Pathol* 2008;60:475-80).



Asparagus and a Healthy Pregnancy

In addition to being a snap to prepare — they're delicious steamed, grilled or oven roasted — one cup of asparagus contains a whopping 114 percent of the recommended daily allowance (RDA) of vitamin K, which is essential for bone health, and nearly 66 percent RDA of folate, which helps maintain a healthy cardiovascular system and is a key to fetal development. Inadequate folate during pregnancy has been linked to several birth defects, including neural tube defects like spina bifida. If you're pregnant or planning to be, incorporate plenty of asparagus into your diet.

Radish's Antibacterial Properties

Radishes have been used traditionally as an antibacterial agent. Now, a hot-off-the-press research study proves this is more than an old wives' tale. A 2009 study in the journal *Foodborne Pathogens and Disease* investigated the antibacterial activity of radish extract against foodborne and resistant pathogens. The researchers found that extracts from the "root, stem, and leaf exhibited selective antibacterial activity against the organisms tested." They found that "the results obtained were comparable to that seen with standard antibiotics." (*Foodborne Pathog Dis* 2009;6:129-36.)

Watercress and DNA

Through the years, watercress has been used to treat everything from coughs to cancer, constipation to alcoholism. And recent scientific research reveals that it may in fact live up to its ancient healing legacy.

An analysis published in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* set out to "determine the effects of watercress supplementation on biomarkers related to cancer risk in healthy adults." The study looked at 30 men and 30 women (30 smokers and 30 nonsmokers) with a mean age of 33. The subjects added 85 grams of raw watercress to their diet daily for eight weeks. The researchers conclude: "The results support the theory that consumption of watercress can be linked to a reduced risk of cancer via decreased damage to DNA and possible modulation of antioxidant status by increasing carotenoid concentrations." (*Am J Clin Nutr* 2007;85:504-10.)

Spinach and Prostate Cancer

Spinach is an incredibly powerful health booster. Studies show that it protects against cancer, cardiovascular disease, cognitive decline, osteoporosis and other ailments. And several recent studies have established spinach's protective effect specifically against prostate cancer. A carotenoid, called neoxanthin, found in spinach seems to be responsible for this effect.

One report, published in the *Journal of Nutrition*, "investigated whether various carotenoids present in foodstuffs were potentially involved in cancer-preventing action on human prostate cancer."

Investigators looked at the effects of 15 different carotenoids on three different human prostate cancer cells. They discovered that the neoxanthin in spinach "significantly reduced cell viability" of the prostate cancer cells. The researchers conclude: "These results suggest that ingestion of leafy green vegetables and edible brown algae rich in neoxanthin and fucoxanthin might have the potential to reduce the risk of prostate cancer." (*J Nutr* 2001;131:3303-6.)

Purple Sprouting Broccoli and Cancer Protection

Although it may be difficult to find in the US, purple sprouting broccoli (PSB) is a true gem among spring vegetables. So, if you can't find it, consider growing your own! PSB contains a phytochemical called sulphoraphane, which is a potent anticarcinogen (*Biochem J* 2002;364:301-7).

Onions and Colon Cancer

Onions contain the flavonoid quercetin, an antioxidant that has been shown to reduce precancerous lesions in the intestinal tract. A 2009 study in the *Journal of Nutrition* investigated whether quercetin protects against colon cancer. The researchers concluded that "quercetin suppresses the formation of early preneoplastic lesions in colon carcinogenesis." (*J Nutr* 2009;139:101-5.)



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