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Spring 2016 CONTENTS



VEG OUT!

Rise and shine! Wake up your dishes with everything vegetables have to offer. Start fresh with these tips and recipes

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04 diabetes Wire

The importance of regular dental visits, keeping your blood sugar under control after meals, and more news you can use

06 diabetes 101

Is type 2 diabetes reversible? See how your lifestyle and genes play a role

07 type 1 SMARTS

Make our expert's healthy habits part of your routine with these tips and tools

09 food IQ

Get carb-smart and keep your blood sugar in check

10 fitness MATTERS

The do's and don'ts of working out

16 body SHOP

Prevent dental problems now

17 pop QUIZ

Are your feet ready for spring? Test your smarts

18 inside OUT

Push negative thoughts aside with strategies for positive thinking

19 healthy LIVING

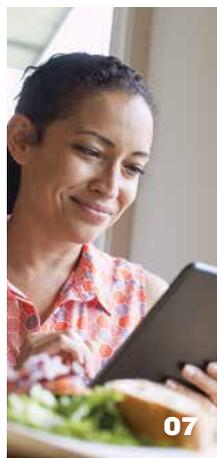
Did you know stress can raise blood sugar levels? Find out how

22 ask THE EXPERT

How can insulin help manage diabetes?

23 up Close

A mother who had a weight problem shares how she helped herself and her children



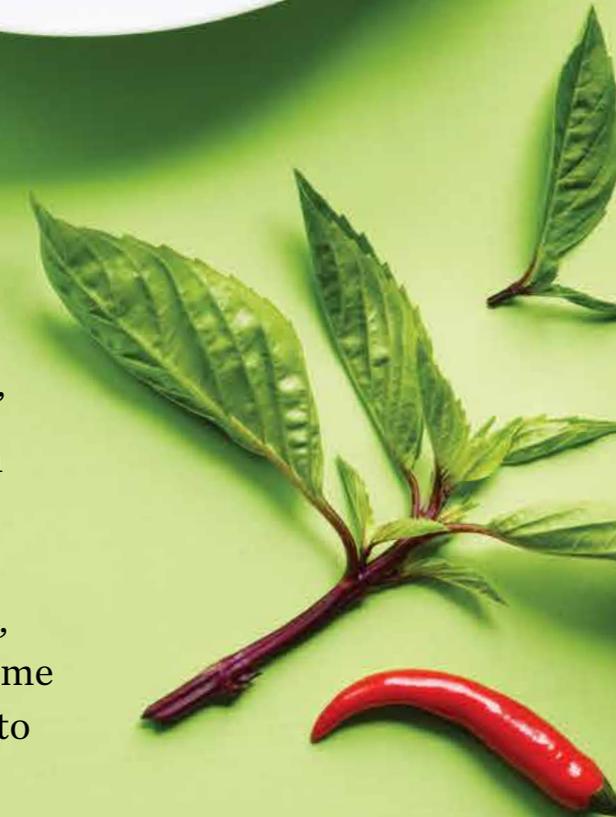
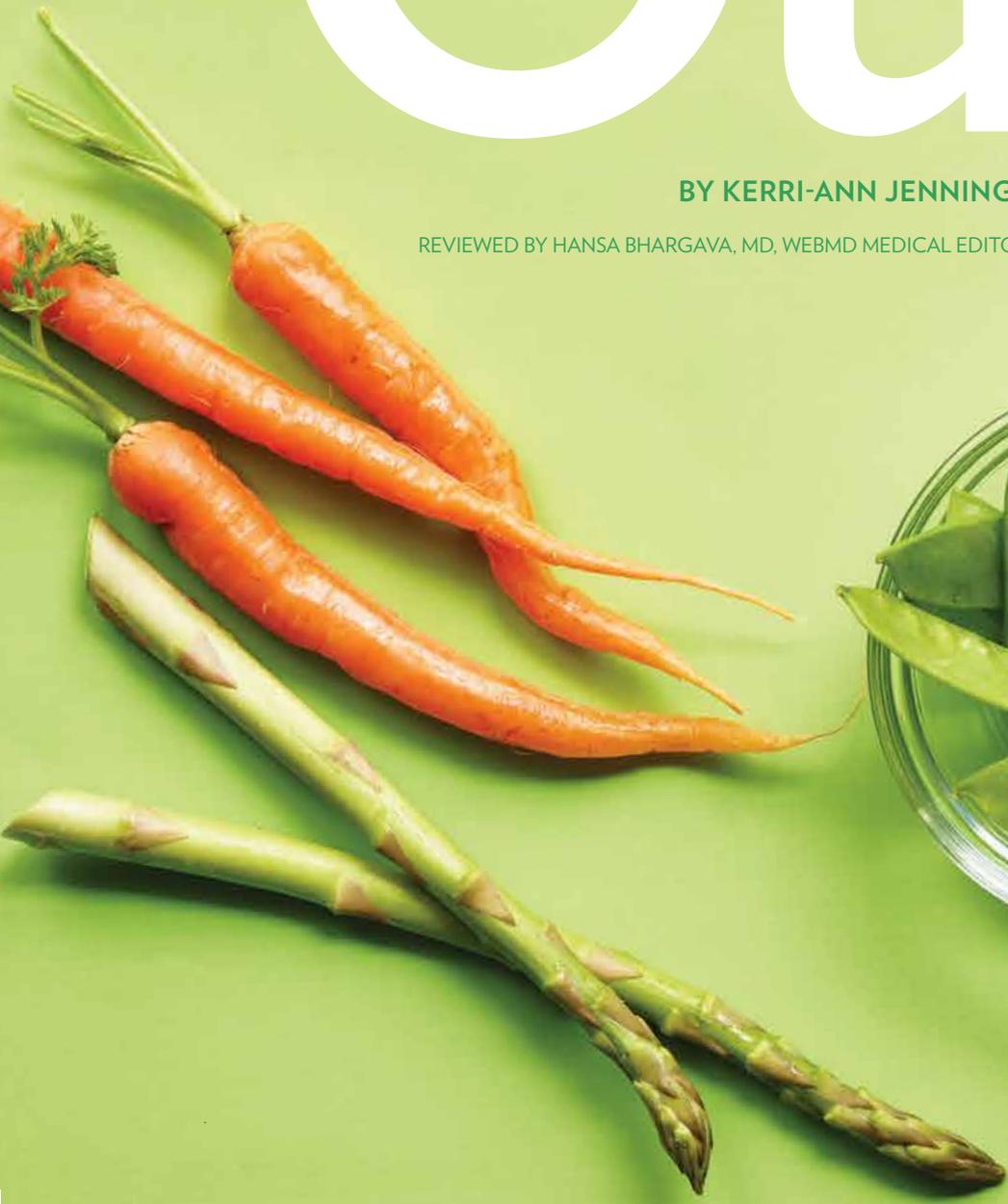
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Veg out!

It's time to wake up your dishes with everything vegetables have to offer. Start fresh with these tips and recipes

BY KERRI-ANN JENNINGS

REVIEWED BY HANSA BHARGAVA, MD, WEBMD MEDICAL EDITOR



Fresh, vibrant, and delicious, spring vegetables—and the dishes you make with them—are a welcome change after winter's hearty fare.

“Spring vegetables are younger and sweeter,” says Keith T. Ayooob, EdD, a registered dietitian and professor at Albert Einstein College of Medicine in The Bronx, N.Y. They're also brimming with nutrition—as are all vegetables, Ayooob notes—as well as versatility. Here are some of his best tips for getting spring vegetables onto your plate.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY LEIGH BEISCH

FOOD STYLING BY DAN BECKER

PROP STYLING BY SARA SLAVIN



EAT THE WHOLE PLANT

Root-to-shoot eating is the vegetable form of the snout-to-tail movement. Many of us toss perfectly edible parts of plants. Those green fronds on carrots and fennel? Ayooob blitzes the greens into pesto, or uses them to garnish. “They’re loaded with potassium and vitamin C and everything that leafy greens have.” If you buy artichokes, get the ones with the longest stems—the stem is an extension of the heart, Ayooob says.

TRY VEGGIES UNGARNISHED FIRST

Really fresh vegetables are so flavorful that you don’t need to do much to enhance them. Ayooob suggests first trying vegetables, such as steamed artichokes, without any dressings or salt. “I recommend that to educate your palate a bit, because if you’re always filled up with fatty stuff, you don’t get to really taste the vegetable.”

Spring Vegetable Curry

Try this flavorful curry with whatever vegetables you have on hand (leafy greens are a great addition). And make sure to set the table with extra basil and cilantro.

Makes 6 servings

INGREDIENTS

- 13.5-oz can coconut milk (about 3¼ cups)
- 2 tbsp yellow curry paste
- 1 cup low-sodium chicken broth
- 1 lb new potatoes
- ½ cups julienned baby carrots
- 5 spring onions, chopped
- 5 sprigs Thai or regular basil, with stems
- 1 Thai or serrano chili, stemmed and thinly sliced (discard seeds for less spicy flavor)
- ½ tbsp fish sauce
- 1½ lbs raw shrimp, any size (if you use precooked shrimp, add at the end and heat through)
- 1½ cups asparagus
- 3 cups snow peas
- ¼ cup chopped fresh basil leaves
- ¼ cup chopped fresh cilantro leaves
- ¼ cup chopped unsalted peanuts

DIRECTIONS

1. In a large saucepan, bring coconut milk, curry paste, and chicken broth to a boil over medium-high heat, whisking until smooth. Add potatoes, carrots, spring onions, basil, chili, and fish sauce. Bring mixture to a simmer over medium-low heat. Cover the pan and cook until vegetables are tender, about 20 minutes.
2. Remove the lid from curry and add shrimp, asparagus, and snow peas. Simmer, uncovered, until shrimp is cooked through, 5 to 7 minutes. Remove basil sprigs and discard.
3. Ladle curry into bowls. Garnish with basil, cilantro, and peanuts.

PER SERVING

345 calories, 31 g protein, 24 g carbohydrate, 15 g fat (7 g saturated fat), 221 mg cholesterol, 7 g fiber, 7 g sugar, 546 mg sodium. Calories from fat: 39%

Watercress Salad With Sesame Dressing

This salad is fresh and bright, featuring contrasting textures of crunchy snap peas, creamy avocado, and light, peppery watercress married with a savory ginger-sesame dressing.

Makes 4 servings

INGREDIENTS

Salad

- 4 cups watercress, washed
- 2 cups sugar snap peas, sliced
- ½ Haas avocado, diced

Dressing

- ¼ cup sesame oil
- 2 tbsp rice vinegar
- 1 tsp low-sodium soy sauce
- 1 tsp sugar
- 2 tsp minced ginger
- 1 tsp minced garlic

DIRECTIONS

1. Layer salad ingredients in a salad bowl.
2. In a blender or mini food processor, blitz dressing ingredients until blended. (You can also simply whisk ingredients, but dressing will be less smooth.)
3. Dress salad, toss, and serve.

PER SERVING

183 calories, 2 g protein, 6 g carbohydrate, 17 g fat (2 g saturated fat), 3 g fiber, 3 g sugar, 98 mg sodium. Calories from fat: 81%



SHOP THE RAINBOW

Even spring’s daintier vegetables come in an array of colors: Blushing radishes, bright green peas, and new white onions are among the colorful produce this time of year. Eating a variety of colors and types of vegetables ensures you get an array of phytochemicals—those plant-based nutrients have disease-fighting benefits. The leafy greens that are abundant in spring deliver lots of carotenoids. “We think of carotenoids as being orange, but all the chlorophyll in greens masks that color,” Ayooob says.

FRESHEN UP FAVORITE RECIPES

Since spring vegetables are tender (think peas, leafy greens, new potatoes, and radishes), they cook up quickly, making them an easy add-in to curries, frittatas, soups, and stir-fries.



Find diabetes-friendly recipes on the [Healthy Recipe Finder](#) at [WebMD.com](#).

LEARN HOW ON PAGE 3





Green Eggs and Ham Crustless Quiche

Turns out you don't need crust to enjoy quiche. Serve this flavorful, spinach-packed "quiche" with a large green salad with fennel, radishes, and orange segments.

Makes 4 servings

INGREDIENTS

2 tbsp whole wheat panko
1 tbsp olive oil
8 spring onions, bulbs and greens, trimmed and minced
10 cups baby spinach
2 eggs
2 additional egg whites
½ tsp salt
1½ cups fat-free evaporated milk
1 cup shredded Gruyère
¼ cup dill, minced (or substitute other fresh herbs)
1 cup lean, low-sodium diced ham

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Spray a 9-inch pie plate with cooking spray. Evenly sprinkle panko on bottom of pan and set aside.
2. Heat a large sauté pan over

medium heat; add olive oil and heat. Add spring onions and sauté until fragrant. Add spinach in handfuls until wilted. Remove from heat and let cool.

3. In a large bowl, beat together eggs, egg whites, salt, evaporated milk, Gruyère, dill, and ham. Fold in cooled greens.
4. Pour into prepared pie dish. Bake 40–45 minutes, or until just set (center should be a bit jiggle).

PER SERVING

271 calories, 24 g protein, 22 g carbohydrate, 11 g fat (4 g saturated fat), 114 mg cholesterol, 3 g fiber, 12 g sugar, 619 mg sodium. Calories from fat: 36%



PUT HERBS ON THE TABLE

"Herbs and spices can help you eat more fruits and vegetables, plus they have their own antioxidants they can bring to the table," Ayoob says. And of course, using herbs and spices adds flavor, which lets you use less salt. Mint, for instance, wakes up salads, including chicken and tuna salad. Get in the habit of setting out chopped spices and herbs along with the salt and pepper.

PLANT A GARDEN

At the very least, grow some potted herbs and veggies. It doesn't get fresher than pulling a carrot from your backyard or trimming cilantro and basil from the pots on your windowsill. Not only do they look attractive, they're a visible reminder to eat more vegetables.