

# To Your Health

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## “Lettuce” Introduce You to the World of Green Leafy Vegetables

Flavor, color, texture – dark green leafy vegetables provide all sorts of nutritious reasons to include them in your meals. They offer plenty of the antioxidant beta carotene, which forms vitamin A that may help protect you from some forms of cancer, and another antioxidant, vitamin C. The darker the leaves, the more nutrients the greens contain. So Romaine lettuce has six times more vitamin A and C than iceberg, for example.

Here are some more benefits of dark leafy greens:

- Some greens contain lutein, which contributes to good vision and may help protect your eyes from cataracts and macular degeneration.
- All types of greens fill your plate with few calories and essentially no fat.

Stock up on leafy greens and:

- Top a sandwich with fresh spinach leaves instead of lettuce.
- Add nutritional punch and flavor to a meal with mustard, turnip or dandelion greens.
- Perk up a salad with a variety of greens instead of just one.

- Top a pizza with sautéed spinach.

“Lettuce” suggest some more ideas. Try:

- Arugula or watercress for a peppery flavor.
- Red-and-white radicchio for a splash of color.
- Chicory or escarole for flavor with a “bite.”
- For deeper-green color, choose spinach.
- Add Romaine if you enjoy a crisp texture.

Next time you are in the produce department of your favorite grocery store, take a minute to check out the selection of green leafy vegetables.

Source: [www.eatright.org](http://www.eatright.org) – web site of the American Dietetic Association 4/06

## National Women’s Health Week

Women are encouraged to reconnect to their health during National Women’s Health Week – which kicks off Mother’s Day, May 14.

Take some time for yourself. One of the best gifts you can give yourself is to schedule an annual visit with a health care provider.

Talk to your health care provider about the recommended screening tests and immunizations for your

age and background. You can learn more about these recommendations by visiting [www.womenshealth.gov/screeningcharts](http://www.womenshealth.gov/screeningcharts)

Getting a regular check-up is one of five prevention steps the Office on Women’s Health encourages women to take. The other four include: eating well, being physically active, not smoking, and following basic safety rules.

Source: *IoWoman* newsletter, April 2006

For more information on women’s health, visit [www.womenshealthiowa.info](http://www.womenshealthiowa.info) ... the *Iowa Women’s Health Information Center*. This web site and toll-free call center was created to provide free objective, medically accurate health information for women in Iowa.

## Ways to Cut 100 Calories a Day

(Activities based on a 170 pound person)

- Spread your bread with 2 tablespoons jam instead of butter or margarine (100 vs. 200 calories).
- Do some gardening for 16 minutes.
- Use a can of solid white tuna packed in water vs. oil (175 vs. 275 calories per 6 ounces).
- Play with a child for 15 minutes.

- Choose a medium-sized baked potato over a large one (160 vs. 278 calories; about the size of average woman's fist).
- Go for a brisk walk for 13 minutes.
- Jazz up your baked potato with salsa instead of butter (5 vs. 100 calories per tablespoon).
- Rake or mow the lawn (with a push mower) for 16 minutes.

## Read the Label

The packaging of a food product can provide useful information when making food selections. For example, foods may be labeled "calorie free," "low calorie," "reduced or lower in calories," "light," or "lite."

Here's a guide to what those words mean:

- **Calorie free** = less than 5 calories per serving
- **Low calorie** = 40 calories or less per serving
- **Reduced calorie or lower in calories** = at least 25% fewer calories than the regular version.
- **Light or lite** = half the fat or a third of the calories of the regular version.

## Question:

### ***What is organic food? Is it healthier?***

Organic food is food that is produced without any of the following:

- conventional pesticides
- fertilizers made with synthetic ingredients or sewage sludge
- bioengineering
- ionizing radiation

Meat, poultry, eggs and dairy products that are produced organically come from animals that are given no antibiotics or growth hormones.

According to the American Dietetic Association, there is no research-based evidence supporting the idea that organic food is safer or more nutritious than conventionally produced food. The differences between organic and conventionally produced food are found in the manner in which the food is grown, handled, and processed.

## Party Food Issues

It's time for graduation parties, wedding receptions, family reunions, and other gatherings. Situations like these mean that you are preparing food for more people than you do on a daily basis, and the serving times can be much longer. This could lead to a food safety disaster if you don't take precautions.

Your guiding principle should be: ***Keep food out of the temperature danger zone - 40°F to 140°F.***

## Preparing Foods

If you are making a **cold** salad (chicken, pasta, potato, tuna), chill all ingredients (refrigerator cold - 40°F) **before** mixing together.

If you are preparing a **hot** food (barbeque pork or beef, ground beef) and will need to chill and reheat for serving you have 2 critical steps:

1. **Prepare** the food and chill it promptly in the refrigerator in

shallow containers (no deeper than 2 inches). Metal pans will dissipate the heat faster. Avoid overloading your refrigerator!

2. **Reheat** the food. You now treat the food as a leftover, and will need to heat it to an internal temperature of 165°F as quickly as possible and keep it there for 15 seconds. Use a calibrated food thermometer to check the temperature.

Be sure that you keep the **hot food hot during serving time** (above 140°F).

## Serving Foods

- Keep hot food hot (over 140°F) and cold food cold (under 40°F). Food may be safe at room temperature for 1 to 2 hours. It's best to serve hot food in heated containers, and keep cold food on ice.
- Little bowls of munchies on the table where everyone's hands are in the same bowl is a situation to avoid. Provide a scoop or spoon, and cups or containers for individual portions.

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