This month let’s take a closer look at one of the ‘superfoods’ that have been quite popular – kale. Kale is a cruciferous leafy vegetable that is rich in vitamins A, C, and K, and minerals such as calcium, magnesium, and potassium. In fact, a cup of kale has more vitamin C than an orange. Vitamin C serves many vital functions in the body’s cells.

Kale is rich in nutrients and low in calories, which make it a very nutrient dense food. In addition to nutrients, it is high in antioxidants, particularly quercetin and kaempferol, which counteract oxidative damage caused by free radicals in the body. These two substances protect the heart, lower blood pressure, and have anti-inflammatory and anti-cancer effects.

For every 1 cup of the following vegetables, kale has 35 kcal and the other greens range from 7-11 kcal. Fibre content is between 0.6-1.7 g for all vegetables.

Kale contains at least two times the listed nutrients compared to other vegetables. Highlighted in blue are the key nutrients that the other vegetables are a source of.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VEGETABLE</th>
<th>IRON (mg)</th>
<th>VIT A (ug)</th>
<th>VIT C (mg)</th>
<th>VIT E (mg)</th>
<th>VIT K (ug)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kale</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>544</td>
<td>85.0</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>578.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spinach</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>153.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romaine</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td>60.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iceberg</td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>0.21</td>
<td>18.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swiss Chard</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td>315.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beet Greens</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>160.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Remember that moderation and balance in eating a variety of foods is key! This means that although kale ranks pretty high in nutrient density compared to the other vegetables, it doesn’t mean the other vegetables are any less healthful for the body. It is important to eat them, too!

Some ways to add leafy greens to your diet are:
- In salads, sauces, smoothies, sandwiches, wraps, paninis, omelets
- At the last step in stir-fry – try bok choy, beet greens, kale, or swiss chard
- Steam beet greens or swiss chard or spinach and serve with butter and salt and pepper
- Freeze extra and break off a small amount to add to smoothies or blend into pasta sauce

Tips for variations:
- Sprinkle some parmesan cheese over top prior to baking for some cheesy kale chips
- Add a pinch of cayenne pepper or paprika for spicy chips
- Chop up some garlic for garlicky kale chips

Kale is very versatile as it can be added to savoury dishes, put in salads, smoothies, soups, or eaten on its own when baked to make kale chips!

**Kale Apple Smoothie (serves 1)**

- ¼ cup chopped kale, ribs and stems removed
- 1 small stalk celery, chopped
- ½ banana
- ½ cup apple juice
- ½ cup ice

Per serving: 67 kcal; 9.5g carbs; 2.3g fibre; 1.6mg iron; 727 RAE vit A; 113 mg vit C; 1.7mg vit E

**Kale Chips (serves 6)**

- 1 bunch kale, leaves only
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tsp salt

Bake at 350F (175C) for 10-15 minutes until edges are brown.

References
http://authoritynutrition.com/10-proven-benefits-of-kale/

For individual guidance with our Registered Dietitian, please contact the Health and Performance Centre for a personal consultation.

Mention this newsletter at your first appointment and receive $20 off your nutrition assessment.