

- **Spinach**
- **Mixed Field Greens**
- **Kale Flowers**
- **Poultry Herbs**
- **Spring Garlic**
- **Spring onion bunch**
- **Cilantro**
- **Mint**
- **Lemon Verbena**
- **Thai Basil**

Spinach can claim a special place among vegetables in terms of its phytonutrient content.

Researchers have identified more than a dozen different flavonoid



compounds in spinach that function as anti-inflammatory and anti-cancer agents. (Some of these substances fall into a technical category of flavonoids known as methylenedioxyflavonol glucuronides.) The anticancer properties of these spinach flavonoids have been sufficiently impressive to prompt researchers to create specialized spinach extracts that could be used in controlled laboratory studies. These spinach extracts have been shown to slow down cell division in human stomach cancer cells (gastric adenocarcinomas), and in studies on laboratory animals, to reduce skin cancers (skin papillomas). A study on adult women living in New England in the late 1980s also showed intake of spinach to

be inversely related to incidence of breast cancer.

Excessive inflammation, of course, typically emerges as a risk factor for increased cancer risk. (That's why many anti-inflammatory nutrients can also be shown to have anti-cancer properties.) But even when unrelated to cancer, excessive inflammation has been shown to be less likely following consumption of spinach. Particularly in the digestive tract, reduced inflammation has been associated not only with the flavonoids found in spinach, but also with its carotenoids. Neoxanthin and violaxanthin are two anti-inflammatory epoxyxanthophylls that are found in plentiful amounts in the leaves of spinach. While these unique carotenoids may not be as readily absorbed as carotenoids like beta-carotene or lutein, they still play an important role in regulation of inflammation and are present in unusual amounts in spinach.

Decreased risk of aggressive prostate cancer is one health benefit of spinach consumption that should not be overlooked when talking about the anti-cancer properties of spinach. Interestingly, in a recent study that evaluated possible prostate cancer-prevention benefits from a variety of vegetables including spinach, broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, Brussels sprouts, mustard and turnip greens, collards, and kale — only spinach showed evidence of significant protection against the occurrence of aggressive prostate cancer.

-excerpt of spinach profile via nonprofit George Mateljan Foundation