# Green Eats

*By: CAROLYN KATZIN, MS, CNS - NUTRITIONIST, EISENHOWER LUCY CURCI CANCER CENTER*

The texture of the fresh peas gives a special appeal to Green Pea Soup.

Healthy nutrition comes from eating a balance of textures, flavors and tastes with visual appeal. We eat with our eyes, as well as enjoy the taste of the food itself, and visually the color green is associated with life and vitality.

Green foods are rich in chlorophyll which contains magnesium, one of the most essential nutrients for all of life. Bruce Ames, PhD, anti-aging expert and Professor of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology at the University of California, Berkeley, estimates that 60 percent of Americans do not consume sufficient magnesium, and magnesium is at the center of most essential enzymes, including those of the cardiovascular and nervous system. This chronic insufficiency may be compromising mitochondrial health (in most cells, mitochondria are responsible for cellular energy and growth), and thus, may be one of the major causes of age-related diseases.

Alcohol appears to increase the requirement for this essential nutrient, and if you are now drinking red wine for the resveratrol (an antioxidant), you will need to make sure you are also getting more magnesium for full health benefits. Eat one green food for every glass of wine!

Green colored foods are also rich in naturally protective phytonutrients (plant derived essential nutrients). Watercress is a particularly good salad vegetable as it not only has a high ORAC (measurable antioxidant activity) score, but also is a member of the cabbage family, which stimulates liver detoxification processes. Here is a delicious soup that can be eaten hot or chilled.

**WATERCRESS SOUP**

3 bunches watercress (about 1 pound)

1 Tablespoon butter, organic, unsalted

1 1/2 cups chicken stock

1 Tablespoon cornstarch

1/2 cup low-fat milk

Pinch cayenne pepper

Salt and pepper to taste

Wash the watercress and remove the stems. Place in a large strainer and scald with boiling water. In a large pot, melt the butter and add the cornstarch, cooking briefly. Slowly add the stock and bring to a boil. Add the watercress and cook for five minutes. Season to taste. Place in a blender and blend. Finally, add the milk and serve hot, or refrigerate and serve chilled later.

Serves 2.

**Nutrients per serving:**

97 calories; 6 g protein; 8 g carbohydrate

2.5 g fat; 7 g lutein; 35 mg magnesium;

1 g dietary fiber

Another delicious green soup is pea soup. Most of us are familiar with the texture of split peas (soaked overnight to reconstitute before cooking), but fresh or frozen peas are wonderful for this soup. The key is the texture of the pea itself which gives the special appeal of this dish.

**GREEN PEA SOUP**

10 ounce pack frozen green peas, or 1/2 pound fresh peas, shelled

1 Tablespoon butter

1 Tablespoon cornstarch

11/2 cups chicken stock

1/2 cup milk, or half and half

Salt and pepper to taste.

Garnish with a sprig of mint.

Melt the butter and add the cornstarch, cooking briefly. Slowly add the chicken stock and bring to a boil. Separately, cook the frozen peas (microwave or steam). Add the peas and milk, and blend to soup until smooth. Serve hot. Garnish with mint.

**Nutrients per serving:**

135 calories; 7 g protein; 16 g carbohydrate; 5 g fat; 2 g lutein;

25 mg magnesium; 4 g dietary fiber

Healthy Living is a publication of Eisenhower Medical Center · © Copyright 2014 All Rights Reserved · www.emc.org