

PART TWO

Green Foods and Health

“Foods are the perfect preventive medicine agents. They provide a steady, but low-level amount of nontoxic therapeutic factors over a lifetime . . . varieties of factors that prevent many diseases simultaneously. “As a disease preventive, a whole food is often better than individual compounds squeezed out of it . . . a food is a complex bundle of some ten thousand chemicals, breaking it down may simply dissipate its powers.”

—John Naisbitt⁹⁵

Although all of us have long known that green foods are important to our health, most of us have not really known why. Green vegetables look good and taste good to some of us. We know they are low in calories. But mostly, we just know that they're green, and for some reason that seems to be good.

Before chemists isolated and identified specific nutrients, green foods were valued for their healing and “blood-building” qualities. Since the 1940s, a healthy diet has been defined as one which provides adequate amounts of all the known nutrients.

Dieticians and governmental agencies generally recommend that everyone eat at least four servings of fruits and/or vegetables daily. Of these, at least one should be a potent source of vitamin C. The other specific recommendation is that we eat at least one daily serving of a dark green or yellow vegetable. This recommendation is made primarily because dark green and yellow vegetables are rich in beta-carotene. Green vegetables, including the cereal grasses, are also considered excellent sources of iron, calcium, and folic acid. They are good sources of vitamin C and a wide variety of trace elements.

In this section we take a look at the specific nutrients found in the young green leaves of wheat and barley. We follow this with an overview of the relationship of these green food nutrients to diseases.

The first “nutrient” we look at is really not considered a nutrient at all by dieticians and doctors. Chlorophyll would be more appropriately labeled a “food factor”, for it has never been shown by scientific research to be essential to the diet of any animal. But the value of chlorophyll as a therapeutic agent has been researched since the 1920s, and a substantial amount of evidence suggests that this green plant substance has many benefits for humans.

We then turn to an elaboration of the more conventional nutrients abundant in young green cereal grasses. These include vitamins and minerals, as well as extremely high quality vegetable proteins and fiber. This is followed by a brief look at the value of enzymes and raw foods in the diet.

Here again we emphasize that the story of wheat and barley grass nutrition is really the story of the essential nutritional value of all dark green vegetables. The importance of these foods in the diet cannot be overstated. The cereal grasses are concentrated green foods. It is important to include any of the dark green leafy vegetables in our daily diets.