



Spring has Sprouted...and So Can Your Seeds!

Incorporate Sprouts into Your Daily Routine and Enhance Your Nutrition

Sprouting is a great way to grow nutritious greens right in your own home. Sprouts need nourishment in order to grow into a mature plant. The act of sprouting breaks down nutrients stored within the seed into a very bioavailable form for the sprout to use for this purpose and for us when we eat them. Sprouts are also packed with live enzymes which help us to better digest our food and to assimilate its nutrients. The chlorophyll in sprouts has antioxidant properties and contains essential minerals.

Any seed or legume can be sprouted in a large mason jar. Micro greens, like pea shoots, and grains can be grown in a sprouting tray.

Broccoli sprouts are particularly beneficial due to their sulforaphane and glucoraphanin compounds, which provide cellular protection and cardiovascular support due to their antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties. While these beneficial compounds are specific to broccoli sprouts, there is an untold number of vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, and other phytonutrients found in other sprouts as well.

However, Michael Greger, MD does not recommend alfalfa sprouts, even when they are home sprouted, as fecal bacteria can hide in the seed's nooks and crannies and cause illness.

While all seeds sprout, sprouting seeds have likely been cleaned more extensively than those being sold for cooking and have likely been checked for pathogens. Seeds not being sold for sprouting may also be older than sprouting seeds and may not sprout as well. Non-organic sprouting seeds have likely been soaked in a bleach solution in order to destroy pathogens. So get to know the company supplying you with your sprouting seeds and buy only organic seeds.

When storing your dormant seeds, think cool, dry, and dark. Refrigerating them is better and freezing is best. You don't have to thaw frozen seeds prior to sprouting. Freezing seeds also prevents infestation by Indian Meal Moths.

Make sure your sprouter is clean. Cleaning with a bleach solution is not necessary and thank goodness it isn't! Clean well with soap and water or food-grade hydrogen peroxide. Some people prefer to use grapefruit seed extract.

The first step of sprouting is soaking. It wakes up the seeds and begins the germination process. Different seeds absorb different amounts of water. A good rule of thumb is to add 1 part seed to 2-3 parts filtered water. For proper sprouting, make sure that you provide plenty of water. It doesn't matter if you give them more than they need, but it will matter if you give them less.

Periodically stir your seeds. Believe it or not, seeds can be completely submerged in water and yet fail to absorb any. It is referred to as the Nestlé's Quick syndrome. It is similar to how a spoon of Nestlé's Quick can be submerged into a glass of almond milk and still remain dry.

Soaking times differ and can vary between no soaking at all and soaking for 8-12 hours. Some seeds soak in warm or hot water. Refer to the directions on your seed package.

After your seeds are done soaking, inspect them for non-seed particles and remove them. Tap on any seeds floating on the water and see if you can get them to sink. Remove any seeds that insist on remaining floating.

Rinse seeds 2-3 times daily with plenty of cool water. If you turn your faucet on high, it will help to clean and oxygenate your sprouts.

It is critical that you drain as much water as possible from your sprouts after your thorough rinsing with plenty of cool water. Shake your jar in all directions.

Sprouts need adequate ventilation so keep them in an open space. If it is hot and humid in that space, consider moving the air around with a fan when you are at home.

Despite what is suggested to the contrary, sprouts can be grown from start to finish right on your kitchen counter. You do not need to keep them away from light at the beginning and they will get adequate light from the artificial and natural light in your room when they are ready for it.

When your sprouts are done growing, give them one final thorough rinse, then let them dry completely before placing them in the refrigerator. They should be dry to the touch. It may take 8 to 12 hours after the final rinse and thorough drain. If your sprouts are large enough, they can be put in a salad spinner. If not, they can be placed in a hemp bag and spun around. However, I suggest you spin the hemp bag outside in order to avoid a major mess inside your house!

Once they are dry, place your sprouts in an airtight container to keep them moist longer. You can also use one of those special plastic produce bags that breathe. Your sprouts should keep for weeks in the refrigerator.

Stagger several seed sprouting jars and you'll always have a fresh supply available for your salads, sandwiches, and for topping your soups and favorite dips.

*I am a Plant-Based Nutrition Counselor, a graduate of Cornell University's plant-based nutrition program, the **only collegiate program in the country** which focuses on the medical benefits of a low-fat, plant-based lifestyle, and am Board Certified by the American Association of Drugless Practitioners. I help people to achieve their wellness goals by providing them with the tools that they need to gain control over their health. If you would prefer individualized assistance with your weight, with a chronic, degenerative disease, with other health and wellness aspirations, or if you would like me to speak to a group, please email me at traceyeakin@gmail.com or give me a call at 724.469.0693 to arrange a time. Please visit my web site at www.traceyeakin.com for additional information.*

Sources:

www.sproutpeople.org

www.myvega.com/blog/2013/supercharge-your-seeds-and-legumes

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