

Go Green...with a Smoothie!

Smoothies are a great way to get calories, protein and other nutrients in an easy to drink form. While fruit is a major ingredient in smoothies, greens, like spinach and kale, can be added to add nutrients. The greens add fiber, iron, riboflavin, folate, calcium, magnesium, potassium, and vitamins A and C to your smoothie. These nutrients are important in many body functions including immunity and bone health.

Most people shy away from green smoothies because they are worried about the taste. But, green smoothies taste great! The flavor of the greens is hidden by the fruit in the mixture.

There is one reason to be careful of green smoothies. The spinach or kale in these smoothies is high in vitamin K. This vitamin helps your blood clot. If you are taking a blood thinner, like coumadin, you want a level intake of vitamin K. This means you want to eat about the same amount of vitamin K rich foods each day. So, maybe a small green smoothie every day...

Green Smoothie (from Eatwell.com)

- 1 ripe medium banana*
- ½ ripe pear, or apple, peeled and chopped*
- 1 cup chopped kale leaves, tough stems removed *
- ¼ cup orange juice
- ¼ cup cold water
- 6 ice cubes
- ½ Tablespoon ground flaxseed

Place banana, pear (or apple), kale, orange juice, water, ice cubes and flaxseed in a blender. Pulse a few times, then puree until smooth, scraping down the sides as necessary. Makes one smoothie. Per smoothie: 240 calories; 5 g protein; 3 g fat; 55 g carbohydrates; 8 g fiber; 987 mg potassium.

Groovy Green Smoothie (adapted from allrecipes.com)

- 1 banana, cut in chunks*
- 1 cup grapes or strawberries*
- ¾ cup (6 ounces) vanilla yogurt
- ½ apple, cored and chopped*
- 1½ cups fresh spinach leaves*

Place the banana, grapes or strawberries, yogurt, apple and spinach into a blender. Cover, and blend until smooth, stopping frequently to push down anything stuck to the sides. Makes two smoothies. Per smoothie: 205 calories; 6.1g protein; 1.9g fat; 45g carbohydrates; 3.7g fiber

***Note:** If your white blood cell count is low, wash fruit with soap and peel before using. Omit grapes and cook strawberries before use. Frozen spinach, which is cooked before freezing, should replace fresh spinach or kale.