



Awesome Asparagus

Question for executives. What's tall and green and healthy all over?

If you guessed asparagus, you're right. Asparagus is one of the few vegetables that contain so many healthful nutrients that it's linked to everything from curing cancer to improving your love life to relieving arthritis and rheumatism to strengthening a weak or enlarged heart.

I consider it one of the most nutritionally well-balanced vegetables we can eat. Asparagus has been a beloved vegetable for many centuries. Egyptians, Greeks, Romans, and French King Louis XIV loved the tender vegetable so much that he ordered special greenhouses built for a year-round supply. Since then, it has been labeled as the "Food of the Kings." While slightly more expensive than other vegetables because it is harvested by hand, the healing properties of asparagus make it worth every penny.

Asparagus is an alkaline food rich in protein and low in calories and carbohydrates. An excellent source of dietary fiber, asparagus is also rich in niacin, phosphorus and very low in sodium. It's one of the few vegetables that has the calcium and magnesium in the ideal ratio of 2:1. An excellent source of potassium, folic acid, vitamins A, C, and traces of vitamin B complex, asparagus contains more of the antioxidant glutathione than any other fruit or vegetable. Glutathione fulfills numerous cellular functions, including detoxifying the body of carcinogens, protecting cell membranes and DNA from toxic compounds, participating in immune function, and recycling vitamins C and E into active forms supporting eye health.

According to a study at [Rutgers University](#) in New Jersey, there is evidence to suggest the benefits of asparagus include tumor reducing properties - the saponins from asparagus inhibited the growth of human leukemia cells and the flavonoid, quercetin, acted as a cancer-fighting anti-inflammatory.

Asparagus is also high in vitamin K, which is essential for blood clotting and bone health, and rich in the amino acid asparagine, a diuretic that helps dissolve uric and oxalic acids which is useful in the treatment of gout.

Current thought on the fetid urine smell from asparagus comes from an amino acid present and excreted by the kidney in all individuals. A study from Israel has shown that only 23% of individuals have the gene that appreciates the odor.



Asparagus is a stalk like vegetable that grows in sandy soil and is part of the Lilly family along with garlic, onions and leeks. here are a few hundred varieties of asparagus but only a small number is edible. Most common are the green or greenish purple variety. White asparagus is considered a tender delicacy because it is grown underground. Unfortunately, without sunlight the stalks also lack the benefits of chlorophyll.

Choose straight firm stalks with tight tips. If you can't eat it right away, keep the stalks dry and wrap tightly in a plastic bag and store in the refrigerator for about three days. Lightly steaming asparagus preserves the most glutathione.

If you are wondering how asparagus can help you live a healthier lifestyle, call your doctor at Executive MD for a dietary consultation.

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