

Cauliflower Blooms With Cancer Protection

The Folklore. “Cauliflower is nothing but cabbage with a college education,” Mark Twain once said, alluding to its high status within the humble family of cruciferous vegetables. Originating in the Middle East, this stately vegetable was once considered haute cuisine in France, where it was cooked with cream, truffles and foie gras.

The Facts. A mild member of the *Cruciferae* family (which also includes broccoli, cabbage, Brussels sprouts, bok choy and kale), cauliflower is made up of hundreds of tiny white flowers that stop growing at the bud stage. The buds form florets, which, in turn, form the dense white head you buy.

Specialty stores and farmers’ markets may offer green varieties, as well as purple and a new intriguing orange variety. (Look for them now, as fall is prime time for cauliflower harvest.) Green broccoflower, a cross between cauliflower and broccoli, is widely available in supermarkets.

Green cauliflower contains a bit more of vitamins A and C than white. The new orange variety has 25 times the vitamin A of white—not nearly as much beta-carotene as overachievers like sweet potatoes and carrots. Purple cauliflower contains antioxidants called anthocyanins.

The Findings. Cruciferous vegetables contain unique anticancer compounds, including glucosinolates and isothiocyanates, which stimulate enzymes that deactivate carcinogens. Levels vary depending on the variety and growing conditions. Some studies show that people who eat the most cruciferous vegetables—including cauliflower—have lower rates of lung, stomach, colon, prostate, bladder and breast cancers.

The Finer Points. Choose cauliflower with a firm head, tight florets and no brown spots. Keep cauliflower in its wrapping or in a perforated plastic bag in the refrigerator crisper for up to five days. Wash just before using.

Cauliflower can be boiled, steamed, baked, sautéed or microwaved, though cooking with water causes losses of vitamin C and anthocyanins. Try steaming it whole (score the core first). Or separate into smaller bunches of florets, scoring the stems so they cook as fast as the flowery tops. To maintain white-

ness, add a tablespoon of lemon juice or vinegar to the cooking water. Remove the cover in the first minutes of steaming to release offensive sulfur compounds. Avoid overcooking to prevent a strong smell and to keep cauliflower from getting mushy.

For a mild dish, dress cauliflower with lemon juice and delicate herbs like dill, tarragon or parsley. Or be bold with capers, anchovies, citrus, pepper, mustard seed, olives, chili, ginger, garlic or curry. Mashed cauliflower can substitute for mashed potatoes. Cook until soft, then puree with nonfat milk and a touch of salt, pepper and paprika.

—Andrea Klausner, M.S., R.D.

Notable Nutrients in Cauliflower

(one cup cooked, about six florets)

Calories:	29
Vitamin B6:	0.2 milligrams (11% DV)
Folate:	55 micrograms (14% DV)
Vitamin C:	55 milligrams (92% DV)
Fiber:	3.3 grams (13% DV)

DV = Daily Value

Cauliflower Soup

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 1 leek, white part only, chopped
- 1 medium baking potato, peeled and coarsely chopped
- 1 small head cauliflower (about 1 ¼ pounds), cored and coarsely chopped
- 2 anchovy fillets, rinsed and chopped
- 2 quarts cold water
- salt and freshly ground white pepper

1. Heat oil in nonstick saucepan. Add onion and leek and sauté over medium heat, stirring often, until tender but not brown, about 10 minutes.
2. Add potato, cauliflower, anchovy and water. Bring to a gentle simmer and cook, uncovered, for one hour.
3. Cool briefly, then puree in batches in a blender or food processor.
4. Return to saucepan, bring to a simmer and season with salt, pepper or your favorite herbs to taste.

Makes four 2-cup servings.

Nutrition Information Per Serving:

127 calories, 5 grams protein, 4 grams fat, 21 grams carbohydrates, 5 grams fiber, 123 milligrams sodium (without added salt), 76 milligrams vitamin C.

Adapted with permission from *The Strang Cancer Prevention Center Cookbook* (McGraw-Hill, 2004). Available from EN by calling (800) 571-1555.

- **Eating fish that’s broiled or baked, but not fried, may reduce your risk of atrial fibrillation (AF), the most common type of heart arrhythmia,** according to a Harvard study of more than 5,000 older people. In the 12-year study, those who ate tuna (fresh or canned) or broiled or baked fish one to four times a week were 28% less likely to suffer AF. There was no similar protection from fried fish, which is typically made from lean fish like cod and pollack and provides fewer omega-3 fatty acids. In addition, frying causes chemical changes that allow unhealthy fats in the frying oil to replace the healthful fats in the fish.

Circulation, July 27, 2004.

- **Snacking on nuts may lower your risk of gallstones,** according to findings from the Nurses’ Health study, which followed over 80,000 women for 20 years. Compared to women who ate nuts (including peanuts and peanut butter) less than once a month, women who ate five or more ounces a week were 23% less likely to need surgery for gallstones, even after controlling for contributing factors like body weight, activity, fiber, alcohol, coffee and fat intake. Nuts may decrease bile acid secretion and inhibit cholesterol production, thus reducing the risk of stones, say the researchers.

The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, July 2004.

- **A daily high-dose multivitamin may slow progression of HIV to AIDS,** say researchers at Harvard School of Public Health, who followed 1,078 HIV-infected women in Tanzania. In the eight-year study, women who received multis containing high-dose vitamins, including B-complex (up to six times the Daily Values), vitamin C (500 milligrams) and vitamin E (30 milligrams), had significantly higher T-cell counts and fewer complications and were nearly 30% less likely to develop AIDS or die of AIDS-related causes than women taking placebo.

The New England Journal of Medicine, July 1, 2004.

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