

A CRUCIFEROUS CRUSH

Research suggests if you want to boost your body's internal detox systems, you should develop a crush on cruciferous vegetables.

what are cruciferous vegetables?

Cruciferous vegetables come from the *Brassica* genus. These include broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, kale, watercress, rocket, wasabi, horseradish, bok choy, kohlrabi, radish, rutabaga and turnip. They get their *cruciferous* name from the shape of their flower, which has four petals that resemble a cross. Such vegetables tend to have more intense and bitter flavours, and they can taste peppery, mustardy or sulphurous.

why are they good for us?

Cruciferous vegetables provide important phytonutrients that switch on the phase 2 enzymes in your liver, which are responsible for removing toxins and drugs from your body and dampening inflammation. They are keys to stopping the spread and growth of cancer.

But there's a catch. You first need to chew or chop the vegetables so that their enzyme myrosinase can come into contact with certain precursor phytonutrients that are stored in separate parts of the plant cell. Myrosinase

then converts these phytonutrients to other substances, such as the molecule sulforaphane, which is known to have potent anticancer effects.

Unfortunately, much of the myrosinase in these vegetables is destroyed with cooking. To counteract this, you should either chop these vegetables at least 40 minutes before cooking or eat or drink them raw. This is also why commercially produced blanched and frozen broccoli lacks the ability to form sulforaphane.

how to eat more

You can enjoy cruciferous vegetables in soups, stir fries, salads and smoothies. Because the level of sulforaphane in humans is about three times higher after eating raw or lightly cooked broccoli that has been steamed for up to three minutes, include cruciferous vegetables at least three times a week in their uncooked state. Adding some olive oil or lemon juice will help them to taste less bitter.



Sue Radd is the award-winning author of *The Breakfast Book* and co-author of *Eat To Live*, internationally acclaimed for showing how savvy eating can combat cancer and heart disease and improve wellbeing. See www.sueradd.com for more nutrition information or follow her on Twitter @CulinaryMed.