

Serve Vitamins With Your Meals

VIM and vitamins go together, and because of this it is very necessary for us to know how to preserve the vitamins and salts in preparing our greens for the table. The following notes have been taken from the "British Medical Journal," and should prove very valuable to the average housewife.

Conservation of Vitamins

Vitamins are lost or destroyed in the preparation and cooking of green-stuffs by many of the methods now in common use. As it is of special importance at the present time to secure the maximum nutritive value from all the foods available, it is desirable to employ methods of preparation and cooking of foodstuffs which conserve their nutrients to the utmost.

The following generalisations summarise our knowledge of the behaviour in greenstuffs of the vitamins most likely to be affected in the course of preparing green vegetables for the table. Some simple rules based on these generalisations are given, and cooking methods for greenstuffs are recommended.

Fat-soluble vitamin A is unlikely to suffer damage; water-soluble vitamins B and C are the most likely to be lost on preparation and cooking. This is so for the following reasons:—

(1) Because they are water-soluble, they are dissolved out by soaking or cooking water; they also run out in the watery juice.

(2) Raw vegetables contain enzymes, which are active in destroying the vitamins, particularly if the raw foodstuff is left lying about after being bruised or cut up. These substances which destroy the vitamins become more active as the temperature rises during cooking up to a point at which they themselves are destroyed. This point of destruction is only a few degrees below boiling temperature.

(3) The water-soluble vitamins are themselves also destroyed by heat to an extent which depends on the length and severity of the heating.

(4) The water-soluble vitamins are found to diminish in amount in foods left standing after they are cooked.

(5) Salt or sugar added to vegetables before cooking lessens the amount of destruction under conditions described in (3) and (4) above.

(6) Vitamins B and C are more stable in the presence of acid, which is sometimes added as vinegar. The addition of alkali (carbonate or bicarbonate of soda) will, on the other

hand, hasten the destruction of the vitamins.

Practical Rules for Treating Green Vegetables

- (1) Obtain as fresh as possible.
- (2) Keep in a cool damp place in order to reduce wilting.



International Wool Secretariat Fashion.
Pale grey flannel for the graceful bias skirt with sunpleated godets; grey flannel combined with handknit ribbing in fine grey wool for the short-sleeved jacket . . . red leather belt and buttons, red scarf and hat.

(3) Take precautions to avoid damage due to crushing or bruising during transport or handling.

(4) If vegetables are soaked, use salt water (two teaspoonfuls to one pint).

(5) If vegetables are to be shredded or finely chopped for salads, prepare immediately before serving.

(6) Use the smallest possible amount of water for cooking.

(7) Have water boiling before adding vegetables.

(8) Add salt to water before adding vegetables.

(9) Add vegetables gradually or in small amounts at a time, in order to prevent water going off the boil.

(10) Cook vegetables no longer than is necessary to render them tender.

(11) Plan cooking arrangements so that vegetables are dished up and served immediately after they are cooked. On no account allow to stand for a long time on a hotplate.

(12) If there is water left after cooking, drain off and use in the preparation of soups and gravies; alternatively, if successive batches are being cooked on the same day, use the same water again, adding more if necessary.

Methods Resulting in Least Loss of Vitamin C

Method 1.—Boil for the shortest time in a small quantity of boiling salted water. Use water left over for boiling other batches and for addition to soups and gravies.

Method 2.—Slice the fresh vegetables into ribbons about 2 to 3 inches long by $\frac{3}{4}$ wide and cook briskly for half to one minute in a small quantity of hot oil or dripping to which salt has been added (two teaspoonfuls oil and half teaspoonful salt to an average-sized cabbage). Add a small quantity of boiling water (half to one cupful for above) and stew for about ten minutes in a closed container. Keep the lid on so that no steam escapes. When the vegetables are cooked only a very little water should be left. This method is used throughout the Far East and India. In Europe the nearest approach to it is the French method of "casserole" or "conservative" cooking, by which the vegetables are placed in a closed fireproof dish with a little water and fat and cooked in the oven or over a low flame for 15 to 25 minutes.

In hay-box cookery vitamin C is destroyed, so that this method should not generally be used for cooking green vegetables, which are particularly valuable in the diet for their vitamin C content.

Steaming of vegetables even with the best equipment is not as satisfactory as the methods described above.

Conservation of Salts

If the precautions described above are carefully taken, it can be relied on that effective conservation of the valuable salts present in green vegetables will also be secured.