

# Real Foods That Heal



Weekly bulletin, volume 2, #4  
April 24, 2008

## **Carrots, back in your lunchbox!**

How many of you get really excited about carrots?

Maybe I should repeat the question, since no-one raised their hand. But you like carrots, right? It's really hard for me to find someone who dislikes carrots, but also hard for me to find someone who speaks of them with the same ardor as for, say, chocolate. Maybe we are just taking our good friend for granted. A lot of us, including me, saw carrots in their lunchboxes at school, and crunched them as loudly as we could to attract attention in the lunchroom! They are so inexpensive, and so familiar, that we underestimate their power. Let's take a few moments to look at carrots in a new light.

Carrots, raw or cooked, are one of nature's most concentrated sources of the precursors of vitamin A: beta carotene, alpha carotene and lutein+zeaxanthin. For brevity, we'll call that group natural carotenoids. The body uses these powerful antioxidants to mop up "free radicals" which cause oxidative damage to cells and DNA within the body. The presence of these carotenoids and other antioxidants is probably one of the chief reasons that a diet high in vegetables and fruit is associated with lower rates of cancer. Specifically, studies on dietary reduction of breast cancer risk give special importance to the role of carotenoids. A study published in the Journal of the National Cancer Institute in 1999 showed that the more alpha-carotene, beta-carotene, and lutein/zeaxanthin women consumed from foods, the lower their breast cancer risk. A mere ½ cup of sliced cooked carrots provides an entire day's supply of vitamin A (over 13,000 IU!), without any risk of overdose because it is the natural form of mixed carotenoids, not as preformed vitamin A which you may find in less expensive vitamin pills.

A word about sugar content and glycemic index: in some well-versed diet circles, carrots have gotten a bad name because most of the calories come from sugar. True. But that same ½ cup serving has only 27 calories and a glycemic load of 1 (think "close to zero.") Realistically, carrots either cooked or raw are not a threat to your health because of their sugar content. Enjoy them as a snack or as a vegetable side dish with almost any meal, knowing you are decreasing your risk of cancer and other chronic diseases with every bite!

Now are you excited?

Steamed Mixed Vegetables
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I am suggesting these three vegetables together in your steamer for 2 reasons: one is the interesting mix of flavors and colors... no boring food here!! Second, is that they all three have distinctive and complementary profiles with regard to nutritional health and disease prevention.

Cut up carrots, broccoli (large pieces, so the broccoli does not get soggy while the carrots cook), and an onion cut into decent sized pieces, not thin slices. Place them together into a steamer, and take off the heat when the broccoli is still bright green and the carrots are easily speared with a fork. No seasoning is required, and it makes a delicious side vegetable dish with any meal.

To your health,

Robert Pendergrast, M.D.

[www.realfoodsthatheal.com](http://www.realfoodsthatheal.com)

P.S. You know 5 people who deserve to know how to reduce their cancer risk by food choices. Please forward this e-mail to them by using the link below.

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