Your Mom Was Right: The Vitamins That Heal Your Heart Transcript

(Transcripts are generated by AI and may contain errors)

Introduction: Greens as Homemade Vitamins

Alright, let me tell you something my mom never called a supplement, but it might be the most powerful homemade vitamin I ever had. Now before there were capsules, before they were prescriptions, there was greens in the pot.

And they didn't just feed us, they actually helped us survive. Do you think of greens solely as food or as nutrients or vitamins or ways in which we can enrich our body and our organs?

I think of it as all of them. Okay. Because there's vitamins in mustard greens, antioxidants, all those things that you normally get. A lot of times people take vitamins from the bottle, but you can get your vitamins and minerals directly from your greens.

Oh, preach that. I'm Dr. Columbus Batiste. Some interventional cardiologist and a lifestyle advocate. And when prevention fails, I am one of the ones in the cath lab at 2 a.m.

trying to open blocked arteries. But long before I learned my cardiology, my education started in the kitchen, watching my own mother wash and cook greens.

So here's what we're going to cover in a next few minutes. I wanna show you three things. Number one, the history behind these greens, number two, heart science behind why they matter, and number three, best way.

History and Survival of Mustard Greens

The best you can cook them so you actually keep the benefits. Now let's start with the history, because this goes deeper than most people realize. Mustard greens aren't just a vegetable, they're history.

They come from a plant called Brassica juncea, cultivated for thousands of years across Africa and Asia. And there was a time when people lived under forced hardship, when access to nourishing food was restricted and rations were designed to keep bodies working, not thriving.

So our ancestors did something powerful. They foraged, they planted, They cooked bitter greens, collards, turnips, mustard greens because they knew bitter mint medicine.

That pot of greens? That wasn't just dinner, that was survival. You know my kids always say that they always had greens beans and rice when you used to watch them.

Is that the main reason you always kept in the rotation? Was it taste, more tradition or health or all the above? All of the Above. Okay. Health wise, musters are good for the digestive system.

Okay, it helps with inflammation as well. Yes. And it gives you a stronger heart. All right. Yeah. Stronger bones. Oh, you're speaking my language now you speak my.

Now here's where it gets interesting. Because those same ancestors, they saved more than just the greens. They saved the liquid. they save the pot liquor.

That dark, mineral-rich broth left after simmering greens? People drank it because it held vitamins, minerals, and protective compounds. The first supplements.

Long before a lab test, they knew this. Don't waste what keeps you alive. And here's a science-friendly translation. When you cook greens in water, some water-soluble nutrients, They move into the broth.

So if you simmer them, don't dump that pot liquor. Use it in beans, lentils, or soups, Or maybe just drink it. But watch the salt. Watch the salt, especially if you're managing blood pressure or heart failure.

We know that one teaspoon equals 2000 milligrams of sodium. That's not witchcraft, that's folklore, not old wives' tale. It's nutritional wisdom born under pressure.

So tell me about what, did you always save the potlicker or drink it? Was that a part of what you and your mom and dad did and siblings?

Pot Liquor and Nutrient Preservation

Yes, when I was younger. Within the liquids, you're having all your vitamins and minerals, all of that, even though when you actually eat, the greens is good for you, but the paprika is even better.

It gets right into your system. And so you drink it, it's delicious. So we know the history. We know our ancestors valued these greens. Now, let me put my cardiologist hat on for a second and show you exactly why they were right.

Here's what the modern science now confirms. Mustard greens, they're packed with vitamin K, with folate, vitamin C, potassium, carotenoids, and like other cruciferous vegetables, also contain glucosinolates, these compounds that can be converted during digestion into protective molecules that help support lower inflammation, healthier blood vessel function, better cardiometabolic health.

Your ancestors didn't know this. They didn' know the words like isothiocyanate, but they knew how they felt after eating the greens. And this is why I'm so biased towards real food, whole food.

Plant-rich foods. Because I'll tell you, nutrients behave differently inside food than they do inside of a high-dose pill. I tell ya, food is a symphony, right?

It explodes in flavor inside your mouth. But supplements? They're a background singer. There a solo act. Now, let's for a second take zoom in on one specific thing, because this is where it really clicks for heart health.

In cath lab translation, heart disease often starts with a plaque. And plaque, it starts what happens to cholesterol over time. So that's the lane that we're in today.

Your liver uses cholesterol to make bile acids. Now most of those bile assets, they get recycled. But some plant foods, especially the leafy cruciferous greens, They bind a portion of bile inside the gut.

When that happens, your liver then has to pull more cholesterol from your blood to make new bile. Now, is this as strong as medication? No. But I will tell you, there are increasing studies that are demonstrating the power of nutrition and soluble fibers that were contained within these vegetables.

Heart Health Science Behind Greens

And one thing we know is it's food working with your physiology, not against it. So if you're still with me, here's the punchline. These greens, they can support healthier arteries over time by helping your body handle cholesterol better and also by supporting healthier blood vessels.

Now, knowing all of that, the question really becomes, how do you actually cook them and keep the benefit? I said it. That brings us right back to the kitchen where it all started.

So what's the number one mistake people make when cooking greens? What'd you say? Actually, they overcook them. Okay. I don't like greens mushy. Like greens where you can actually chew.

Has a little bite to it. Yes. And the thing is, I think a lot of people don' cut the greens up in small pieces. Any of you

cut them, chop them. It's much better for cooking.

We cook faster. And when you eat it, I feel it's better to chew. Absolutely. Get a little bite with it. That's one thing too, as well as we know that there is so much value in the stems.

Yes. This is where all the nutrients are and have a lot of cancer fighting portions are contained in stems, so that's huge. True. Yeah, mom is right. She's always right, but let's build on that for a second because here's what I want you to hear loud and clear.

I don't want to keep the flavor ditched the meat. Keep the flavour ditch to meat because the truth is processed meats are consistently linked to higher heart risk.

Each 50 grams a day is associated with about 18% higher risk of coronary heart disease. You can still get the flavors you want out of your greens without ham hocks.

neck bones or any other processed foods and you will not miss the flavor. Now I know you're skeptical and maybe you've got somebody who thinks greens need meat to taste good.

This next part coming up I want you to send it to them. I told you I did a little time in the kitchen so here's the framework for cooking. Four layers, aromatics, umami, smoke, acid or heat.

Now the aromatics, this is what we have to start with. I want you to brown your onions and your garlic first. We know there is so much value to onions in garlic as it pertains to cardiovascular health.

So it accentuates the power of these green leafy vegetables.

Cooking Greens for Flavor and Nutrition

Next up, umami. Add a spoon of miso, a splash of tamari because these tiny amounts, it gives you big depth. Then we're gonna kick it up a notch. Add in some smoke, some smoked paprika.

It will do the heavy lifting in terms of flavor. Then, we gonna finish this off with vinegar or lemon to brighten and cut that bitterness, but we don't stop there.

We're going to, bam, add in a little bit of spice, a lil bit cayenne or jalapeno, or maybe if you're in the Batiste household, little of habanero pepper.

All right, now quick note, watch the salt, especially if your managing that blood pressure or heart failure. Now here's where mom was ahead of the textbooks.

How you cook greens. It matters. But raw versus cooked? That isn't the fight. Those, it's two different wins. Steaming preserves a lot of protective compounds and it tends to be much easier on your stomach and supports the benefits you're actually here for.

Now long boiling is where you lose the most. Mostly because nutrients and compounds They leach into water, as I described. If you love the flavor, a brief steam followed by a quick saute can be a solid compromise.

Culture and chemistry coming together as one. And honestly, if cooked greens sit better for you, you'll actually eat them. Here's the thing, consistency beats perfection all the time.

My mom didn't call it nutrient preservation. She just knew when food was done right. Side note, she cooked by ear. she could just mix things together and all of a sudden have a phenomenal meal that's prepared there.

All right, now you've gotten the history, the science, and the cooking method, but I wanna take a moment on something even bigger. Here's the part we don't talk about enough.

The same foods that were once dismissed, well, they're now being studied for heart protection. That's not accidental, that's resilience. I want to tell you that I ate greens on New Year's for many years and that wasn't superstition.

That was hope on the plate. Every food on that New Years plate, it stood for something. The greens stood up for paper money, the black eyed peas for coins and the cornbread for gold.

It was a ritual saying that we're still here and we are still building. Tell me a little bit about New years in the tradition of eating greens around New year's.

What's that about? Well, it's in New Orleans. It's more or less like, you know, You get greens and you get a new mop and all of that.

New Yearu2019s Tradition and Cultural Meaning

But the greens is like you always have money. Ah, yeah, It represents that money, huh? That paper green. I love it. So that's why you got to eat a whole bunch of greens.

Guys, make sure you Get your greens too as well. We want to let you Know that you're still here and we're Still building on your health. so we've talked about culture and tradition.

Now let me make Sure we are clear on the medicine. because I don't want anyone walking away from this episode with the wrong idea. So quick myth check.

No single food, I said, no single will unclog your arteries overnight. If somebody, anybody promises that, be careful, very careful. But here's the thing, patterns do matter.

It was even Aristotle who said we are what we repeatedly do. Excellence then is not an act, but a habit. I want to change this up a little bit and say that health, therefore, is NOT an ACT, BUT A HABIT.

means that regularly habits of eating mustard greens, collards, kale as part of a predominantly plant-based diet and lifestyle is going to support healthier LDL cholesterol over time.

It's going support better blood pressure and it's gonna result in better vascular function over-time. That's not height, that's alignment between food and biology.

Now safety note, if you take a blood thinner like Warfarin, you may not need to avoid greens. You just have to keep your intake consistent, but I'm not your physician.

I need you to talk with your clinician and understand that we work for you, you don't work keep you well. I love it. Because it's not about illness is about wellness.

Myths, Blood Thinners, and Daily Habits

And so when you substitute that and you put in wellness into their equation, it is going to take into account not just what you eat, but also how you relate because cooking, I'll tell you cooking is cathartic, right?

So when your standing, you're chopping and your sauteing the onions, your mouth starts to water a little bit as you smell the aroma, It starts the hit and it gets the salivary glands going.

Your digestive. Right? It's an art. Oh, you definitely are an artiste. So now the question is, what do you actually do with all this? Well, here's a simple way to put this into practice starting this week.

I want you to aim for greens four days a week, steam them five to seven minutes. Remember we talked about seasoning, it's always about the flavor. Season with onions and garlic.

Finish with a splash of vinegar or lemon, and then bam, kick it up, a little bit of spice. Pair it with beans and the whole grain. I'll tell you, that's a plate that supports your arteries again and again.

So when I think about my mom's homemade vitamins, I don't think of pills. I think a pot on the stove. Ancestors who refuse to disappear. Food that keeps the heart beating.

Long before cardiologists like myself had stents. How does it feel really for you knowing that what you cooked helped shape really what I do and what?

I teach this aspect of my career. I mean, you taught cooking classes. You and dad had a health food store and you made food from scratch. And so I saw that I was in under your coattails watching that.

What does that mean in terms of those seeds that you planted, those mustard seeds, that it's, it' helping others out there.

Practical Greens Routine and Closing Reflections

I feel that you absorbed everything that to you saw and you heard in regards to food being cooked in the kitchen and eating the food that was cooked. And so it made you want to share it with other people.

You know, because you know how I kept your body. It helped you with not having asthma. So you wanted to help other and I think as you got older and your realize that the way to is going into the profession you're in now, even though you don't have to be a doctor to help people.

Help people in many ways.