



BYTES OF WISDOM FROM HCC NUTRITION

Gaining the Most from Your Garlic

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Ashley Bailey, MS, RD, LDN

We've all heard the tales about garlic protecting against evil and warding off vampires, but garlic is much more than an accessory to be worn around your neck at Halloween! Garlic provides numerous health benefits and is one of the most popular seasoning ingredients around. It goes well in almost any savory recipe and in my opinion, you can never have too much garlic!

This pungent bulb is a member of the allium family along with onions, shallots, chives and leeks. It is arranged in a head called a bulb that is made up of smaller, separate cloves.

Garlic has a long history of medicinal use, dating back over 5,000 years. Records indicate that Hippocrates prescribed garlic for a wide range of medical conditions. The original Olympic athletes also used it as a performance enhancer!

Studies have found that garlic:

- Has **antioxidant, antibacterial, and antiviral** properties
- May help manage **high blood pressure** and **high cholesterol**
- Can reduce the risk of **heart disease**
- Helps reduce **inflammation**.

PRESS and REST

Whether or not you get all the powerful health benefits of garlic depends on how you prepare and cook it. The best known compounds of garlic are allin and allicin:

- **Allin** gives garlic its characteristic taste
- **Allicin** is the main active ingredient in garlic and gives garlic its infamous aroma

Allicin is created when the protein allin and alliinase come into contact. These compounds are isolated from one another until you slice, press, or chew garlic. Heating garlic immediately after slicing destroys the heat sensitive enzyme, alliinase, which is responsible for triggering the reaction. Therefore, **NO allicin is created**.

Heating garlic immediately in a frying pan for **2 minutes** or in a microwave for **60 seconds** reduces garlic to little more than a flavoring ingredient. Bye, bye powerful health benefits!

So how can you reap all the benefits of garlic? Simply make a few changes in the way you prepare it: chop, mince, slice or press garlic then keep garlic away from heat for 10 minutes. It's as easy as **PRESS and REST!!**

By doing this, you maximize the amount of allicin that is created and the health benefits that are associated with garlic.

Choose Fresh

In the culinary world, there is simply no comparison between the flavor of fresh and pre-minced garlic. While the squeeze bottles of pre-minced garlic may seem very appealing, peeling and mincing your own fresh garlic at home really isn't as bad as many people think.

Check out this trick for [peeling an entire head of garlic in less than 20 seconds](#). And it won't leave your hands smelling like garlic the rest of the day!

Now that you have the garlic peeled, invest in a good garlic press and press away. The press will give you the same perfectly minced garlic you would get from the jars at the store (but with a ton more flavor!).