

Super spoons

For various reasons, many people find it impossible to eat the target of five veggies and two fruits daily, but high potency green powders can save the day.

What to look for

They tend to fall into three broad categories: grasses (e.g. alfalfa, barley grass, wheat grass); sea vegetables and algae (e.g. chlorella, dulse, spirulina); and green vegetables (broccoli, kale, spinach). Quality varies, so here's what to look for:

- **Colour.** Ensure the powder is bright green. Many green powders have a dull look, which means they were heated during production.
- **Variety.** Multiple superfood ingredients are preferable.
- **Potency.** Lower-end products might have three to four grams of greens per serving, mid-range products five to seven grams, and high-end 10 grams.
- **Source.** Green powders come from either the whole vegetable, which is freeze-dried and fine milled; or juice extracts, where the vegetable is juiced, freeze-dried and powdered. The latter process is significantly more expensive.
- **Additional ingredients.** Most quality green drink products include probiotics (ideally over four to five billion) and enzymes. Extra antioxidants may be present, along with fibre and protein.
- **Avoid fillers or sweeteners,** whether natural or artificial. Because flavour can be an issue, some powders may be sweetened.

If you've never juiced and never used powdered drinks, start with just one-third of the recommended serving. As you become accustomed to the flavour, incrementally raise your intake to the recommended dose. Superfood powders are powerful, so consult a naturopath to find a product that's suitable for you, in the correct dose, for more is not necessarily better. ✱

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Chlorella and spirulina are potent mineral chelators, making them beneficial for heavy metal detoxification.

THE more fruit and vegetables we eat, the less likely we are to die at any age. This was the clear message from 2014 research from University College London. The first study to link fruit and vegetable consumption with all-cause, cancer and heart disease deaths in a nationally representative population, this study found people who consume seven or more portions of fruit and vegetables daily were 42 percent less likely to suffer premature death than those who eat only one portion. Vegetables were more beneficial than fruit, lowering the risk of death by 16 percent, whereas fruit brought about a reduction of just four percent.

Six months later, another study found a consistent association between fruit and vegetable consumption and mental wellbeing. One-third of participants with high mental wellbeing ate five or more portions of fruit and vegetables a day, compared with only 6.8 percent who consumed less than one portion. So the evidence is unequivocal: vegetables and fruits are crucial for our physical and mental health. But what if you just can't reach the target of five vegetable and two fruit servings a day? Adding a superfood powder can up the count – but it's important to understand they won't compensate for a junk-food diet. Most green drink powders conform to a similar pattern: they contain a base of green superfoods, usually with some enzymes and probiotics, and possibly additional antioxidants and herbs. High-end products may include protein, too.

