



Caroline Bohl MS, RD, CDE  
Registered Dietician  
Certified Diabetes Educator



## Bravo For Broccoli

Broccoli has its roots in Italy and its name derives from a word meaning branch or arm, related to its shape. Broccoli is a cruciferous vegetable and is member of the cabbage family. Like other cruciferous vegetables, broccoli contains phytonutrients that may protect against certain types of cancers, have cardiovascular benefits and may help with eye health. Broccoli also contains calcium which is important for bone health, and vitamin C and beta-carotene which may have anti-oxidant and immune benefits. It also contains folate which may protect against birth defects.

When buying, choose uniformly colored broccoli with a firm stalk. Broccoli is very perishable and should be stored in the refrigerator in an open plastic bag. Do not wash prior to refrigerating as this can encourage spoiling.

There are easy ways to add this nutrition powerhouse to your diet:

- Add some to your favorite breakfast omelet
- Add a few florets to a tossed salad
- Choose broccoli as a topping for pizza
- Add broccoli to pasta sauce along with your other favorite vegetables for a delicious pasta primavera
- Eat raw as a snack using hummus or a balsamic vinaigrette as a dip

Try this recipe for a flavorful and easy side dish:

Lemon Garlic broccoli

### Ingredients

- 2 heads broccoli, separated into florets
- 2 teaspoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- Juice of 1 lemon

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees F. In a large bowl, toss broccoli florets with the extra virgin olive oil, salt, pepper and garlic. Spread the broccoli out in an even layer on a baking sheet. Bake in the preheated oven until florets are tender, about 15 to 20 minutes. Remove and transfer to a serving platter. Squeeze lemon juice liberally over the broccoli before serving.

## What Does Organic Mean?

The market for organic foods has grown steadily over the years as people become more conscious of what they are eating. But, understanding organic food labeling is not easy. Consumers no longer have to play a guessing game as to what labeling on organic foods means as the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has established national standards for the use of the word "organic." Foods labeled as organic are produced without antibiotics, hormones, pesticides, irradiation, or bioengineering. Organic farmers are required to adhere to certain soil and water conservation methods and to standards regarding the humane treatment of animals. Both private and state agencies are used to inspect and certify that these practices are being upheld.

Labeling requirements are based on the percentage of organic ingredients in the product. On single ingredient foods (fruit, vegetables, milk) an organic sticker may appear if the product has been produced organically. For multi-ingredient foods, these terms are used:

- 100% organic – contains only organically produced ingredients
- Organic – contains multiple ingredients which are 95 to 100% organic
- Made with organic ingredients – 70% of the ingredients are organic
- Contains organic ingredients – contains less than 70% organic ingredients

Only foods in the category of 100% organic or organic can display the USDA organic seal. Any product labeled as organic must identify each organic ingredient on the label.

Be aware that being organic does not automatically make a food healthy or taste differently. You still need to read labels for overall nutrition profile. It also does not mean that a food is safer than other foods to eat; it only speaks to the way it was produced. And, the term "natural" has no labeling criteria and does not mean that a food is organic.