

# What's So *Special* About *K*?

By: Karen Simpson

**C**ould one vitamin help rid dark under-eye circles, reduce under-eye puffiness, minimize bruises, rejuvenate skin tone, smooth fine wrinkles, and restore elasticity to the skin? It can if it is vitamin K! The medical field has long recognized vitamin K's value to our circulatory system. When someone has a problem with their blood clotting, it is usually an indication of a vitamin K deficiency. Vitamin K regulates the levels of thrombin so that our blood coagulates properly. It also strengthens our heart muscle and the walls of our blood vessels, and improves circulation. Today, 'K' is getting kudos for its ability to heal and hold back the hands of time. In our quest to maintain a youthful appearance, this special vitamin has become very important.

But just where does vitamin K come from? Vitamin K is a fat-soluble vitamin commonly found in green, leafy vegetables, like spinach, cabbage, lettuce, broccoli, cucumbers, and celery. Remember those endearing Popeye cartoons? Inevitably, Popeye would fall victim to Bluto, miraculously eye a lonely can of spinach. His weak hand would grasp the spinach can, squeeze the lid off, and he would inhale the contents of the can through his pipe or his mouth. Suddenly, his heart would pound furiously, his arms would show muscles, and he would defeat Bluto.

Popeye may have been ahead of his time. He seemed to recognize the value of vitamin K – it healed him quickly and made him stronger. He loved his spinach! What we thought was fantasy portrayed in a cartoon turns out to be true.

Vitamin K's usefulness in skincare is just now becoming popular. Because it stimulates circulation, this vitamin is now commonly being used in therapies regarding spider veins and broken capillaries. Used continually, it has been shown to minimize the appearance of these broken vessels. It is also prescribed in a topical cream format for use prior to and following certain dermatologic or surgical procedures to reduce or minimize bruising. Absorbed through the pores of the skin, it has proven effective in shortening healing time.

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A common problem many of us deal with daily is the dark, often hollow-looking, thinning skin in the orbital area under the eyes. Compounding this is the puffiness or “bags” that often add to the problem. Whether it's because of aging, genetics,

or just a hard party life, this doesn't create our best look. Vitamin K can help. In fact, many effective eye creams touting their ability to reduce puffiness, minimize dark shadows, and fine lines contain vitamin K. Normally, the shadowy darkness under the eyes is attributed to blood pooling in the area. Applied topically, the vitamin works with the circulatory system, stimulates blood flow, and decreases the dark-shadowing effect. When used in combination with retinal, a vitamin A derivative, it not only stimulates the blood flow, but also helps boost collagen and elastin production. This is wonderful news for that very sensitive skin around the eyes, and offers another great tool in the anti-aging arsenal.

So, what's so special about vitamin K? You be the judge. If you have tired looking eyes, with dark circles or bags, an eye cream rich in vitamin K may just be the answer. If you are getting ready to have facial surgery or other types of surgery, you may want to minimize the bruising, so a topical vitamin K cream may work for you. And if, like Popeye, you find yourself in a fight with a bully like Bluto, a can of spinach, rich in vitamin K may make the “Popeye difference” for you! Popeye was right – vitamin K packs a punch! 🍷