

Providing a tangy addition to pickles, salad dressing and fish dishes, fresh dill is available at markets during the summer and early fall while dried dill is available throughout the year.

Dill is native to southern Russia, western Africa and the Mediterranean region. The seeds are stronger and more flavorful than the leaves and are most commonly associated with the cuisines of Scandinavia and Germany. Its green leaves are wispy and fernlike and have a soft, sweet taste.

## Health Benefits

Dill's unique health benefits come from two types of healing components: *monoterpenes*, including carvone, limonene, and anethofuran; and *flavonoids*, including kaempferol and vicenin.

## Protection Against Free Radicals and Carcinogens

The monoterpene components of dill have been shown to activate the enzyme *glutathione-S-transferase*, which helps attach the anti-oxidant molecule glutathione to oxidized molecules that would otherwise do damage in the body. The activity of dill's volatile oils qualify it as a "chemoprotective" food (much like parsley) that can help neutralize particular types of carcinogens, such as the *benzopyrenes* that are part of cigarette smoke, charcoal grill smoke, and the smoke produced by trash incinerators.

## An Anti-Bacterial Spice

The total volatile oil portion of dill has also been studied for its ability to prevent bacterial overgrowth. In this respect, dill shares the stage with garlic, which has also been shown to have "bacteriostatic" or bacteria-regulating effects.

## A Flavorful Way to Help Prevent Bone Loss

In addition to its chemoprotective and bacteriostatic properties, our food ranking system qualified dill as a very good source of calcium. Calcium is important for reducing the bone loss that occurs after menopause and in some conditions, such as rheumatoid arthritis. Our food ranking system also qualified dill as a good source of dietary fiber and a good source of the minerals manganese, iron and magnesium.