**BASIL PESTO**

**BASIC INGREDIENTS**

- ¼ cup toasted pumpkin seeds, walnuts or pine nuts
- 3 cups fresh basil leaves
- ½ cup olive oil
- salt to taste

**OPTIONAL INGREDIENTS**

- 2 cloves garlic, lightly crushed with a heavy knife handle and peeled
- ½ cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese or Romano pecorino cheese
- juice of 1 lemon

The amounts suggested in this recipe are intended as guidelines. We suggest starting with these quantities, mixing it all together in your food processor, and then adding to it based on how you would like the pesto to taste. Some people like very garlicky pesto and may want to add another clove of garlic. You may want to add more cheese and nuts if you want it to be thick like a dip. If you want it to be thinner to mix with pasta you may want to add more olive oil. And, if anyone in your family is allergic to nuts, you can omit them or substitute toasted pumpkin seeds. Young children often find the raw garlic too spicy, so you may omit the garlic for them and add more lemon juice. After you make pesto a few times, you will come up with a recipe that is just right for you.

**METHOD**

Toast the nuts or seeds until they smell delicious. (You can do this on a cookie sheet in the oven, in your toaster oven, or in a pan on the stove over low heat, stirring regularly.)

Put all the ingredients in your food processor and grind until it turns into a smooth paste. Taste and add more cheese or oil or lemon juice or nuts or garlic until it seems right to you.