

Eat by COLOR

Choose from the Colors of the Rainbow

To feel and look your best, include the colors of the rainbow on your plate. We're talking about fruits and vegetables – and their health benefits are indisputable. The list of health-promoting paybacks of eating fruits and vegetables are impressive:

- Lowers your risk of certain cancers
- Decreases your risk of heart disease
- Reduces your risk of stroke
- Reduces high blood pressure
- Helps you lose and manage your weight

As part of an active lifestyle, eating plenty of fruits and vegetables can also help improve your quality of life by giving you sustained energy to perform well and feel even better.

So, the next time you sit down to a meal, make your plate as colorful as you can. Choose foods from these color groups regularly.

Green

Leafy greens, green peppers, broccoli, green beans, peas, green apples, green grapes, kiwifruit, honeydew.

Orange/yellow

Carrots, sweet potatoes, butternut and winter squash, oranges, nectarines, peaches, cantaloupe, orange and yellow peppers.

Red

Tomatoes, marinara sauce, red peppers, apples, pink grapefruit, cherries, watermelon, raspberries, strawberries, kidney beans, red lentils.

Blue/purple

Eggplant, purple grapes, plums, raisins, blueberries, blackberries, black currants, purple figs.

White

Cauliflower, mushrooms, garlic, onions, shallots, turnips, bananas, parsnips.

Think you'll get the same benefits from taking vitamins or other supplements? Think again. Fruits and vegetables deliver vitamins, minerals, fiber and disease-fighting phytochemicals that work as a team to give them their health-promoting properties. There's really no replacement for old-fashioned fruits and vegetables. Aim for nine servings per day.



Color Your Plate

- Start your day with a banana, handful of berries, or a fruit smoothie.
- Snack on fruit throughout the day.
- Enjoy a big salad for lunch, topped with beans and peas.
- Add fresh or frozen vegetables to pasta sauces and meals.
- Keep chopped veggies and low-fat dip on hand for quick snacks.
- Mix dried fruit with whole grain cereal and nuts for an easy trail mix.
- Add fresh, colorful fruit to your cereal each morning.
- Top your sandwiches with greens, tomatoes and fresh peppers.

Did you know?

Blueberries have more antioxidants than most other fruits and vegetables, and contain over 40 compounds thought to have cancer-preventive properties.

Get the benefits of blueberries in the smoothie recipe below. Also, add blueberries to salads, cereals and yogurt.

Blueberry Banana Shake

2 cups low-fat vanilla yogurt (regular yogurt or frozen yogurt)

1 cup vanilla soymilk

1 cup blueberries

1 banana

Place all ingredients in a blender, and blend at high speed until smooth.

Makes
4 servings.

*Per serving: 168 calories,
0 gm fat, 33 gm carbs, 6 gm protein*

*Source: The Cooking Cardiologist;
Dr. Richard Collins.*

“Top 20”

“Eating by color” is a good way to ensure you are getting plenty of health-promoting foods. Colorful foods are good sources of disease-fighting compounds known as antioxidants. It’s these antioxidants that give many foods their bright colors, and fight damage to cells caused by free radicals. Experts believe that free radicals are what may fuel many diseases like heart disease and cancer, and even aging.

To get your daily dose of disease-fighting antioxidants, choose from this list of “top 20” foods that fall highest on the list of the most antioxidant-rich foods, as ranked by nutrition scientists at the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Small red beans (dried)

Red kidney beans

Pinto beans

Blueberries

Cranberries

Artichokes (cooked)

Blackberries

Prunes

Raspberries

Strawberries

Red Delicious apples

Granny Smith apples

Pecans

Sweet cherries

Black plums

Russet potatoes (cooked)

Black beans (dried)

Plums

Gala apples

Source: Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry, June 2004.

Whether a food is eaten fresh, frozen, processed or cooked can affect its antioxidant potency—for good or worse. While blueberries are best when eaten fresh rather than cooked, the antioxidant power of tomatoes is actually raised by gentle cooking. That being said, don’t get hung up on the details. Instead, focus on eating generous daily servings of a variety of fruits, vegetables and other wholesome foods. And...choose from the colors of the rainbow.

For an antioxidant “Power Salad,” toss together some dark leafy greens, dried cranberries or blueberries, red beans and chopped pecans. Toss with olive oil and balsamic vinegar.

