

Colorful Foods Are Powerful Foods

What if all foods were gray? Every banana, tomato and bowl of leafy salad greens might look like they were picked on a stormy day. Our grilled chicken kabobs would look more like ash than food. And can you imagine how gray food would taste? Probably as good as a chunk of concrete.

Fortunately instead, Mother Nature designed a fantastic color palette to excite our senses; and, when it comes to food, thankfully she didn't leave out **sight, smell and taste**.

The richer and varied the color of the foods we choose, the more we benefit health-wise. Eating a variety of colorful fruits and vegetables — **green, yellow-orange, red, blue-purple, and white** — gives your body a wide range of nutrients that are important for good health. Each color offers something unique, like different vitamins, minerals, and disease-fighting phytochemicals, that work together to protect your health. Phytochemicals give fruits and vegetables their color. Therefore, the richer the color, the more health-defending phytochemicals a food will have.

Phytochemicals can:

- Act as antioxidants
- Stimulate detoxification enzymes
- Stimulate the immune system
- Positively affect hormones
- Act as antibacterial or antiviral agents

Only fruits and vegetables, not pills or supplements, can give you the nutrients in the healthy combinations nature intended. In addition to helping you feel better, eating a diet rich in colorful fruits and vegetables can also help reduce your risk of many chronic diseases including cancer, high blood pressure, diabetes, heart disease, stroke and other diseases. So, try making fruits and vegetables the foundation of your healthy eating plan.

How Much Do You Need Each Day?

For good health, women should aim for 5-7 servings of fruits and vegetables every day. Men should have 7-9 servings each day.

Before you start thinking “*how in the world am I going to eat that many servings a day?*” find out just how easy – and tasty - it may actually be. Visit the CDC's Fruits and Veggies Matter website at <http://www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov/what/examples.html>.

To learn about more nutrient-rich foods to add to your daily eating plan, visit anthem.com/ca.



For more information on healthy eating visit these additional sites:

United States Department of Agriculture - <http://www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/>
www.healthierus.gov
www.nutrition.gov

Ways to Enhance Children's Activities and Nutrition (We Can!) -
<http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/obesity/wecan/index.htm>

Nutritive Value of Foods (you will need Adobe Acrobat to open this file) -
http://www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/foodcomp/Data/HG72/hg72_2002.pdf

Source:

National Cancer Institute - <http://www.5aday.gov>

This information is intended for educational purposes only, and should not be interpreted as medical advice. Please consult your physician for advice about changes that may affect your health.