

Eat the Rainbow!



What are phytonutrients?

Phytonutrients are substances found within fruits and vegetables that help protect our health. Phytonutrients provide antioxidants and anti-inflammatory benefits. These compounds may also decrease one's risk of conditions like cancer and heart disease. As more research continues to be published, we will know more about these compounds.



Red

- Contain lycopene
- Heart health, anti-inflammatory, immune system health
- May protect against prostate cancer, heart disease, & lung disease
- Examples: cherries, red peppers, strawberries, beets, cranberries, red cabbage, apples, red onion, radishes, watermelon

Orange

- Contain beta-carotene & beta cryptothanxin
- Skin & eye health, antioxidants, reproductive health
- May protect against heart disease
- Examples: oranges, carrots, apricots, orange peppers, cantaloupe, pumpkin, mangoes, sweet potatoes, papaya, yams, peaches, tangerines

Yellow

- Contain bioflavonoids
- Digestive system health
- May protect against heart disease
- Examples: bananas, corn, golden delicious apples, squash, lemons, yellow peppers, pineapple, yellow onions

Green

- Contain folate
- Heart health & antioxidants
- Cancer-blocking: inhibit cancer-causing compounds
- Examples: avocado, broccoli, green apples, artichokes, limes, asparagus, brussels sprouts, pears, green peppers, cabbage, celery, cucumbers, green peas, green beans, salad greens (kale, lettuce, spinach, etc.)



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Blue & Purple

- Contain anthocyanins & polyphenols
- Brain function & antioxidants
- May protect the heart by blocking blood clot formation
- Examples: blueberries, purple grapes, blackberries, eggplant, purple cabbage, purple potatoes, purple carrots, purple cauliflower

Gardening and phytonutrients

Produce must undergo processing between being harvested and being sold in a grocery store. This processing leads to nutrient degradation and reduces the phytonutrient content of the produce. Therefore, it is best to grow your own food in a home garden and consume it fresh. This produce will have greater levels of phytonutrients than the fruits and vegetables you purchase at the grocery store.



Why is it important to “eat the rainbow”?

By eating fruits and vegetables of a variety of colors, your body receives many different nutrients. When your body has access to all these nutrients, these nutrients can work together to magnify the health advantages of one another. Since no single color is better than the others, eating an assortment of fruits and vegetables is key.

How can I increase my phytonutrient intake?

- **Snack on a piece of fruit or raw vegetables in between meals**
- **Be sure to eat the colorful skins found on produce! Peeling foods like apples reduces the amount of phytonutrients you consume.**
- **Look at your cart while grocery shopping. Make sure there’s a variety of colors!**

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