

NUTRITION BITES

Summer 2023



CARE MANAGEMENT

Eat the Rainbow

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You have probably heard the phrase that you should “eat the rainbow.” But what exactly does this mean, and why is it important to remember? Each color of produce is packed with different important nutrients. By focusing on eating a

variety of colors, you are ensuring that you get a wide range of vitamins, minerals and phytonutrients. This is important because we know each one of these nutrients plays a vital role in our health.

Summer is a great time to try incorporating more colors because there is an abundance of colorful produce available. In this issue of Nutrition Bites, we will investigate what nutrients the different colors provide, what seasonal summer produce to try and how to incorporate more fruits and vegetables into your daily day.

Selecting Fruits and Vegetables by the Color

Red: These fruits and vegetables are packed with vitamin A, vitamin C, potassium and carotenoid lycopene which protects against cancer, heart disease and lung disease.

Summer produce items to try are strawberries, cherries, tomatoes, red bell peppers, raspberries and watermelon.

Green: High in potassium and vitamin K, green produce helps with blood clotting and protects bones from osteoporosis. Dark green, especially leafy green

vegetables, provide an abundance of antioxidants such as sulforaphane, isothiocyanates and indoles which are known for their cancer-fighting properties. These are thought to contain the largest number of antioxidants.

Summer produce items to try are cucumber, green beans, lima beans, okra, tomatillos and zucchini.

Yellow/Orange: These bright fruits and vegetables are full of vitamin C, vitamin A and potassium. They also contain beta cryptothanxin, which may help prevent heart disease.

Summer produce items to try are apricots, cantaloupe, corn, nectarines, peaches and yellow summer squash.

Blue/Purple: This variety of fruits and vegetables contains antioxidants called anthocyanins that may help delay aging and block the formation of blood clots in the heart. These colorful fruits and vegetables are also thought to help urinary tract health and memory function.

Summer produce items to try are blackberries, blueberries, eggplant and plums.

White: White produce doesn’t get enough time in the spotlight because it is often overlooked. These are good sources of anthoxanthins, which promote heart health. Allicin found in garlic and onions has anti-tumor properties. White produce is also high in fiber, potassium and magnesium.

Summer produce items to try are garlic and onions.



How to Incorporate More Fruit and Vegetables

The goal is to try and eat at least five servings of fruit and vegetables each day. Hitting this goal will supply you with a wide variety of vitamins, minerals and phytonutrients. Remember, it doesn't take a lot to equal a serving. For example, a half cup of chopped fruits or vegetables, one cup of leafy greens or a half cup of dried fruit all equal one serving.

Here are several tips to help you reach your goal:

- Try to have half your plate filled with colorful fruits and vegetables.
- Have two servings of fruit or vegetables at breakfast, lunch and dinner.
- Incorporate fruits and vegetables into recipes. Ideas include adding chopped vegetables into scrambled eggs at breakfast or into pasta and casseroles.
- Add fruit to oatmeal, cereal and yogurt.
- Try adding a variety of veggies to your sandwiches.
- Snack on fruits and vegetables throughout the day. For example, carrot sticks with hummus, fruit with yogurt or trail mix with dried fruit are delicious and nutritious options.
- For a sweet after-dinner treat, have berries drizzled with melted dark chocolate.
- Try to fill your cart with a variety of colorful produce at the store.
- Blend fruit and even vegetables into a tasty smoothie to make a refreshing drink during the summer months.
- Check out your local farmers market during the summer to find a large selection of local seasonal fruits and vegetables.
- Don't forget that frozen and canned fruits and vegetables count too.

How to Store Your Fruits and Vegetables

Now that you have an abundance (or "all") of these fruits and vegetables, you may be wondering how to store them to keep them fresh for as long as possible.

Berries: These are delicate and should not be washed until ready for use. Store in dry, covered containers in the refrigerator.

Cherries: Store in the refrigerator in their plastic container or plastic bag until ready to wash and eat.

Peaches, Plums, Nectarines and Apricots: Store on the counter in a paper bag until they are ripe and then move them to the refrigerator where they will keep for a few more days.

Melons: Cantaloupe and honeydew can be stored in the refrigerator before they are cut. Watermelon can be kept in a cool dark place away from other fruit. Store cut melon in the fridge.

Tomatoes: Store at room temperature away from the sun or heat. Storing them in the refrigerator will make them go bad quickly.

Corn: Store in the refrigerator inside their husks.

Green Beans: Keep in the refrigerator until ready for use.

Cucumbers, Eggplant and Peppers: Store at room temperature. These can be kept in the refrigerator for one to three days if they will be used soon after removal from the fridge.

Onions and Garlic: Store in a cool, dark and dry place.



Featured Recipe

Mile High Veggie Sandwich

For complete recipe and nutrition facts: [Eating Well](#)

Preparation time: **10 minutes**

Total time: **10 minutes**

Servings: **1**



INGREDIENTS

2 slices whole-grain bread

3 tablespoons hummus

$\frac{1}{4}$ avocado, mashed

$\frac{1}{2}$ **cup** mixed salad greens

$\frac{1}{4}$ medium red bell pepper, sliced

$\frac{1}{4}$ **cup** sliced cucumber

$\frac{1}{4}$ **cup** shredded carrots

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. Spread** one slice of bread with hummus and the other slice with the mashed avocado
- 2. Stack** the salad greens, bell pepper, cucumber and shredded carrots in the sandwich. **Cut** in half and serve.

Tips for Creating Your Own Veggie Sandwich

- Choose country bread or bread with a firm texture over regular sandwich bread as it will hold up better with these ingredients.
- Use spreads on each slice of bread to form a barrier that will prevent the bread from becoming soggy. Try any variety of hummus, mashed avocado or whipped cream cheese.
- Choose three to four vegetables for your sandwich. Consider trying spinach, tomato slices, sliced red onion, thinly sliced radishes or fresh herbs like basil. Briny ingredients like banana peppers and pickles also work well, but remember that these are higher in sodium.

Nutritional Information:

Serving size: 1 sandwich

Nutrition facts per serving: 325 calories; protein 13g; carbohydrates 40g; dietary fiber 12g; fat 14g (saturated fat 2g).

