



Eating Across The Rainbow-Why It's Important

By: Kristina Hooper

We've all heard the phrases, "Eat across the rainbow" or "Get five a day." We all understand that eating a variety of fruits and vegetables daily is important, but let's not forget why.

The different colors of fruits and vegetables provide different benefits to our health. That is why it is important to choose a variety of colors. It is also important, however to understand which nutrients we are getting out of the different colored fruits and vegetables.

Red - The color of red apples, strawberries, red bell peppers, watermelon, red potatoes, tomatoes, etc. Red fruits and vegetables contain phytochemicals, which help with urinary function, prevention of cancers, and memory function. Lycopene, the red color in tomatoes is a powerful antioxidant with cancer-fighting properties.

Orange/Yellow- The color of oranges, mangos, carrots, papaya, pumpkin, apricots, etc. Fruits and vegetables with an orange/yellow pigment contain beta-carotene, which is a precursor to vitamin A. Vitamin A's major functions are vision, growth, cell differentiation, reproduction, and immune function. Deficiency can cause night blindness, dry skin, poor bone growth, and weak tooth enamel.

Green- The color of broccoli, spinach, honeydew melon, avocados, etc. Green fruits and vegetables are good for vision, bones, teeth, and helps prevent some cancers. Vitamin E is found in leafy greens. Its functions are to protect cell membranes, and it is also an antioxidant. Vitamin K is also found in leafy greens, and it helps with blood clotting. Vitamin C is found in greens such as broccoli. Its major functions are for collagen synthesis, hormone and neurotransmitter synthesis and antioxidant. Now you see why mom always made you eat your green leafy vegetables!

Blue/Purple- The color of blueberries, eggplant, purple grapes, plums, raisins, etc. Blue/purple fruits and vegetables are good for the urinary tract, memory, healthy aging, and prevention of some cancers. Fruits such as blueberries have a high amount of antioxidants, which can help prevent cancer.

White- The color of bananas, cauliflower, potatoes, white peaches, white corn, etc. These fruits and vegetables are important for cardiovascular health and healthy cholesterol levels.

There are so many different nutrients within the fruits and vegetables we consume. Knowing the hidden benefits to eating a variety of colors on a daily basis is important. Fruits and vegetables are a necessary component in our diets, not only for normal body function, but also to protect and repair our immune system. With all the toxins we encounter on a daily basis, it is vital that we have



antioxidants in our bodies to ward them off. Just remember, “An apple a day keeps the doctor away.” , so choose a variety of colors!

For more information visit: www.dole5aday.com

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