

# Eating for Wellness

By Christine Thomas, tthomas18@kc.rr.com

## **What can eating a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables do to protect my health?**

There is tremendous value in eating fruits and vegetables as they contain strong antioxidants which counter free radicals that can damage cells. Antioxidants are naturally occurring compounds found in fruits and vegetables. They are composed of vitamins and plant pigments. Plant pigments give the fruits and vegetables their traditional color. The five primary color categories for fruits and vegetables are Red, Green, Yellow/Orange, Blue/Black/Purple, and White/Tan/Brown. Eating a variety of colorful fruits and vegetables brings the combined power of the antioxidants together.

## **How much is enough?**

At a minimum, adults should eat a total of 5-9 servings of fruits and vegetables a day – selecting at least one from each color category. A serving size is:

- One medium-sized fruit
- 1/2 cup raw, frozen, cooked, or canned fruit or vegetable
- 1/2 cup 100% fruit or vegetable juice
- 1 cup raw, leafy vegetables
- 1/4 cup dried fruit

## **What can the various color categories do for me?**

Eating fruits and vegetables from the Red category helps promote heart health and maintain memory function and urinary tract health.

- Beets
- Blood oranges
- Cherries
- Cranberries
- Pink or red grapefruit
- Pomegranates
- Radicchio
- Radishes
- Raspberries
- Red apples
- Red grapes
- Red onion
- Red pears
- Red peppers
- Red-skinned potatoes
- Rhubarb
- Strawberries
- Tomatoes
- Watermelon

Eating orange and yellow fruits and vegetables helps maintain heart and vision health and supports the immune system.

- Apricots
- Butternut squash
- Cantaloupe
- Carrots
- Grapefruit
- Lemons
- Mandarin oranges
- Mangoes
- Nectarines
- Orange and yellow peppers
- Oranges
- Papayas
- Peaches
- Persimmons
- Pineapples
- Pumpkins
- Sweet corn
- Sweet potatoes
- Tangerines
- Yellow apples
- Yellow beets
- Yellow pears
- Yellow squash

Green fruits and vegetables reduce the risk of heart disease, promote vision health, lower blood pressure, and keep red blood cells, bones, and teeth strong.

- Artichokes
- Arugula
- Asparagus
- Avocados
- Bok choy
- Broccoli
- Brussels sprouts
- Celery
- Collard greens
- Cucumbers
- Endive
- Green apples
- Green beans
- Green cabbage
- Green grapes
- Green onions
- Green peppers

- Honeydew melon
- Kale
- Kiwi
- Leafy greens
- Leeks
- Lettuce
- Limes
- Mustard greens
- Okra
- Peas
- Spinach
- Swiss chard
- Turnip greens
- Zucchini

Blue, purple and black fruits and vegetables help encourage healthy aging, and they improve urinary tract health, memory function, and heart health.

- Blackberries
- Black currants
- Blueberries
- Dried plums/prunes
- Eggplant
- Elderberries
- Plums
- Purple cabbage
- Purple figs
- Purple grapes
- Purple peppers
- Raisins

The final category is White/Tan/Brown. This group doesn't contain vivid pigments, but the fruits and vegetables in it help maintain heart health and healthy immune systems.

- Bananas
- Brown pears
- Cauliflower
- Dates
- Figs
- Garlic
- Jicama
- Kohlrabi
- Leeks
- Mushrooms
- Onions
- Parsnips
- Turnips
- White corn

- White-fleshed potatoes
- White nectarines and peaches

These are just some ideas of the multitude of colorful fruits and vegetables available. Take a look at the categories and see what you can add to your diet this week. Enjoy!

**For additional information on fruits and vegetables:**

<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/antioxidants.html>

<http://www.mypyramid.gov/>

[http://www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org/?page\\_id=164](http://www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org/?page_id=164)