

## September is Fruit & Vegetable Month



### What is Fruit & Vegetable Month?

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) jointly publish the Dietary Guidelines for Americans every 5 years. The current 2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans focuses on the big picture with recommendations to help make choices that add up to an overall healthy eating plan. A healthy eating plan includes fruits, vegetables, lean protein, dairy, grains, and oils. The recommendations in the guidelines aim to promote health, prevent chronic disease, and help people maintain a healthy weight.

### What can eating fruits and vegetables do for me?

It's essential to get a colorful variety of fruits and vegetables into your diet every day. Colorful fruits and vegetables provide a wide range of vitamins, minerals, fiber, antioxidants and phytochemicals. Your body needs these to maintain good health and energy levels, protect against the effects of aging, and reduce the risk of some types of cancer and heart disease.

Phytochemicals are found in plants that may have health-related benefits. Many of the phytochemicals and other compounds that make fruits and vegetables good for us also give them their color. It's important to sample the complete color spectrum every day to get the full health-promoting benefits of fruits and vegetables.

## Make Colorful Food Choices

Color of plant	Phytochemical(s)	Fruit/Vegetable source	Possible Benefits
Red	Lycopene and anthocyanins	Red apples, blood oranges, cherries, cranberries, red grapes, pink/red grapefruit, red pears, pomegranates, raspberries, strawberries, watermelon, beets, red peppers, radishes, radicchio, red onions, red potatoes, rhubarb, tomatoes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decrease risk of some cancers</li> <li>• Heart health</li> <li>• Memory function</li> <li>• Urinary tract health</li> </ul>
Red-purple and blue	Anthocyanins and polyphenolics	Blackberries, blueberries, black currants, dried plums, elderberries, purple figs, purple grapes, plums, raisins, purple asparagus, purple cabbage, purple carrots, eggplant, purple-fleshed potatoes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decrease risk of some cancers</li> <li>• Urinary tract health</li> <li>• Memory function</li> <li>• Healthy aging</li> </ul>
Green	Lutein and indoles	Avocados, green apples, green grapes, honeydew, kiwi, limes, green pears, artichokes, arugula, asparagus, broccoli, brussel sprouts, green beans, green cabbage, celery, cucumbers, lettuce, green onions, peas, green peppers, sugar snap peas, spinach, zucchini	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decrease risk of some cancers</li> <li>• Vision health</li> <li>• Strengthening of bones and teeth</li> </ul>
Yellow and orange	Carotenoids and bioflavonoids	Yellow apples, apricots, cantaloupe, yellow figs, grapefruit, golden kiwifruit, lemons, mangoes, nectarines, oranges, papayas, peaches, yellow pears, pineapple, tangerines, yellow watermelon, yellow beets, butternut squash, carrots, yellow peppers, yellow potatoes, pumpkin, rutabagas, yellow summer squash, sweet corn, sweet potatoes, yellow tomatoes, yellow winter squash	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decrease risk of some cancers</li> <li>• Heart health</li> <li>• Vision health</li> <li>• Healthy immune system</li> </ul>
White, tan, and brown	Allican	Bananas, brown pears, dates, white nectarines, white peaches, cauliflower, garlic, ginger, jicama, mushrooms, onions, parsnips, white-fleshed potatoes, shallots, turnips, white corn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decrease risk of some cancers</li> <li>• Heart health</li> <li>• Maintain healthy cholesterol levels</li> </ul>

## Ways to increase fruit and vegetable intake

- Have a fruit or 100% juice at breakfast daily.
- Make fresh fruit and vegetables visible in your home.
- Microwave fresh or frozen vegetables for dinner.
- Grab an apple, orange, banana, pear, or other piece of portable fruit to eat on the go.
- Snack on raw veggies like baby carrots, pepper strips, broccoli, and celery.
- Pick up ready-made salads from the produce shelf for a quick salad anytime.
- Pile spinach leaves, tomatoes, peppers, and onions on your pizza.
- Add strawberries, blueberries, bananas, and other brightly colored fruits — fresh, frozen, or canned — to your waffles, pancakes, toast or plain yogurt.



- Stash bags of dried fruit in your lunchbox, purse or backpack for a convenient snack.
- Stir fresh or frozen vegetables into your pasta, noodles, or omelet.
- Switch out pastas for spiralized veggie noodles such as carrots, squash and zucchini.
- Whip up smoothies made from fresh or frozen fruits and vegetables, ice, and yogurt.
- Jazz up your soups or sauces with a can of kidney beans, peas, corn, or green beans.

## **Cancer prevention trials at Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey**

If you would like further information about clinical trials for preventing cancer, please call Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey's Office of Human Research Services at 732-235-8675. For additional information about nationwide cancer prevention trials, you can call the National Cancer Institute at 1-800-4CANCER or visit their website at [www.cancer.gov](http://www.cancer.gov).

## **Where can I find further information?**

The Resource and Learning Center

732-235-9639

[www.cinj.org/rlc](http://www.cinj.org/rlc)

Provides reliable, relevant and current information about all aspects of cancer.

Have A Plant™

[fruitsandveggies.org](http://fruitsandveggies.org)

Nutrition.gov

[www.nutrition.gov](http://www.nutrition.gov)

The American Institute for Cancer Research

(800) 843-8114

[www.aicr.org](http://www.aicr.org)



RLC website QR code.  
Scan with smartphone / device.