

Can You Eat A Rainbow?

Fruit and vegetables fall into five different colour categories: red, purple/blue, orange, green and white/brown. Each colour carries its own set of unique disease fighting chemicals called phytochemicals. It is these phytochemicals that give fruits and vegetables their vibrant colour and of course some of their healthy properties.

What's in a colour?

RED

Red fruits and vegetables are coloured by a natural plant pigment called lycopene. Lycopene is a powerful antioxidant that can help reduce the risk of cancer and keep our heart healthy.

PURPLE/BLUE

The plant pigment anthocyanin is what gives blue/purple fruits and vegetables their distinctive colour. Anthocyanin also has antioxidant properties that protect cells from damage and can help reduce the risk of cancer, stroke and heart disease.

ORANGE/YELLOW

Carotenoids give this group their vibrant colour. A well-known carotenoid called Betacarotene is found in sweet potatoes, pumpkins and carrots. It is converted to vitamin A, which helps maintain healthy mucous membranes and healthy eyes. Another carotenoid called lutein is stored in the eye and has been found to prevent cataracts and age-related macular degeneration, which can lead to blindness.

GREEN

Green vegetables contain a range of phytochemicals including carotenoids, indoles and saponins, all of which have anti-cancer properties. Leafy greens such as spinach and broccoli are also excellent sources of folate.

BROWN/WHITE

White fruits and vegetables contain a range of health-promoting phytochemicals such as allicin (found in garlic) which is known for its antiviral and antibacterial properties. Some members of the white group, such as bananas and potatoes, are also a good source of potassium.

Fruit and vegetable colour chart

Red	Purple/Blue	Orange/Yellow	Green	Brown/White
Tomato Red capsicum Radishes Strawberries Rhubarb Cherries Red grapes Raspberries Watermelon Red apples	Beetroot Red cabbage Eggplant Purple asparagus Blackberries Blueberries Purple grapes Plums	Carrots Rockmelon Lemons Sweet potato Pumpkin Pineapples Mangoes Corn Oranges Squash Peaches Nectarines Apricots Grapefruit	Spinach Asparagus Avocados Broccoli Peas Green apples Green grapes Limes Kiwifruit Green beans Lettuce Cabbage Celery Cucumber Green capsicum	Cauliflower Brown pears Mushrooms White peaches Garlic Bananas Potatoes Dates Onions Ginger Parsnips Turnip

Introduce children to thinking about 'eating a 'rainbow' with our rainbow plate craft activity.