

# EAT THE RAINBOW

**NATURAL FOODS HAVE PHYTOCHEMICALS AND PHYTONUTRIENTS THAT PROVIDE THE FOOD WITH THEIR VIBRANT COLORS. A DIET HIGH IN COLORFUL VEGETABLES AND FRUITS HAVE BEEN SHOWN TO HELP REDUCE THE RISK OF HEART DISEASE AND CANCER, WHILE ALSO AIDING IN GUT AND CHOLESTEROL HEALTH.**

**Red fruits and vegetables** are colored primarily by a plant pigment called lycopene. Lycopene is a powerful antioxidant that can help reduce the risk of cancer, promote prostate health, and keep our heart healthy. Although cooking foods can sometimes take away some of the health benefits of the food, lycopene is enhanced by cooking it. Cooking tomatoes offers greater health benefits than eating them raw. In addition to lycopene, many red fruits and vegetables offer vitamin C, folate, and flavonoids. Flavonoids are antioxidants that can help reduce inflammation.

**Red food spotlight:** One cup of cooked tomatoes has almost all your daily vitamin C and 25% of your vitamin A. Tomatoes also offer potassium and iron.



Carotenoids give foods their vibrant **orange or yellow color**. Beta Carotene (found in sweet potatoes, pumpkins and carrots) gets converted into vitamin A. Vitamin A is good for our mucous membranes and eyes. Another carotenoid, lutein, helps reduce cataract and age-related macular degeneration. Beta Carotene and alpha carotene also support white blood cell function (immune health), promote skin health and healing, and aid in bone growth.

**Orange food spotlight:** A medium baked sweet potato provides your daily vitamin A and significant amounts of vitamin C, B, calcium, iron, and potassium. Sweet potatoes are higher in potassium than bananas.





**Green vegetables** contain a range of phytochemicals including isothiocyanates, carotenoids, indoles, and saponins, all of which have anti-cancer properties. In addition, many green vegetables are high in vitamin K (helps with blood clot formation), folic acid (aids in reducing birth defects in pregnancy), potassium (helps lower blood pressure), and omega-3 fatty acids. Leafy greens (such as spinach) and broccoli are also excellent sources of folate.

**Green food spotlight:** One cup of swiss chard provides all of your daily vitamin A and K, and half of your vitamin C. It is rich in magnesium, iron, potassium, calcium, and fiber.



The **purple-blue color of foods** is primarily due to anthocyanin. The darker the blue/purple hue, usually the greater the phytochemical concentration. Anthocyanins are antioxidants that support heart health and reduce risk of cancer and stroke. Flavonoids in purple and blue foods also helps to promote brain function and blood flow.

**Purple/blue food spotlight:** One cup of blueberries has more than 25% of your daily vitamin C, K, and manganese. A daily cup of blueberries reduces cardiovascular risk and improves arterial stiffness.



**White fruits and vegetables** contain a range of health-promoting phytochemicals including flavonoids and allicin (found in garlic). Allicin has both antiviral and antibacterial properties. White foods such as bananas and potatoes, are also a good source of potassium.

**White food spotlight:** One cup of parsnips provide about 25% of daily fiber, vitamin C, and vitamin K. They also contain potassium, magnesium, vitamin E, vitamin B, and calcium.