

The Lunchbox Nutritionist ***Kathleen Searles MS, RD, LDN***



As a food and nutrition expert, I always stress the importance of eating a variety of colorful vegetables and fruits for optimal nutrition and balanced eating. Have you ever wondered what makes fruits and vegetables pop with color and if there is a link between these colors and our overall health and longevity? This month I am going to share the benefits of eating a variety of color in your diet, along with tips on how to increase your nutrient and color profile!

- Kathleen Searles

Summer of Color



In the quest for improved health and disease prevention we are always on the search for the one superfood that promises to deliver longevity and vitality. However, truth be told, there is no one food that can be claimed to be the “magic” pill. Instead, researchers have found two key properties, known as antioxidants and phytochemicals which can decrease risk of cancers, heart disease, and other chronic medical conditions. Antioxidants and phytochemicals are properties found in a variety of foods (particularly in fruits and vegetables) that help protect our cells from damage caused by free radicals. Free radicals are molecules that are thought to play a part in the aging process, some autoimmune diseases, as well as the development of cancers. Therefore, eating a diet that is rich in antioxidants and phytochemicals can help decrease the risk for chronic diseases. Below you will find suggested foods rich in these antioxidants and phytochemicals classified by color along with health properties and benefits. Increase the color on your plate by mixing in fruits and vegetables from each color of the rainbow and you will not only improve your health but you will also add years to your life!

Foods from the Rainbow:

News and Events:

Spring is here, and the warm weather too! Does this have you thinking of trying a 5K, joining a softball team, taking up hiking, or playing in tennis or golf tournaments? I have some new sports nutrition packages available to help



Orange/yellow fruits and vegetables such as: apricots, cantaloupe, carrots, mangoes, papayas, peaches, yellow peppers, pumpkin, and sweet potatoes contain the natural plant pigment called "carotenoids." Carotenoids play an essential role in the health of our eyes, as well as reducing the risk of cancers, heart disease, and improving our overall immune system.

Red fruits and vegetables such as: beets, red cabbage, cherries, cranberries, pink grapefruit, red grapes, red peppers, pomegranates, raspberries, rhubarb, strawberries, tomatoes and watermelon contain natural plant pigments called "lycopene" and "anthocyanins." Lycopene is a carotenoid that has been found to help reduce the risk of cancers, especially prostate cancer. Anthocyanins act as a powerful antioxidant, helping to protect our cells from free radical damage and keep our heart healthy.

Green fruits and vegetables such as: artichokes, asparagus, avocados, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, green cabbage, kiwi, lettuce, green onions, and peas are colored by the natural plant pigment chlorophyll. Dark green fruits and vegetables provide an excellent source of the antioxidants lutein and indoles. Lutein (found in foods such as dark greens, peas, and green peppers) works to support eye health and reduce the risk of cataracts. Indoles (found in broccoli, cabbage, and other cruciferous vegetables) have been found to provide protection against some cancers.

Blue/purple fruits and vegetables such as: blackberries, blueberries, eggplant, prunes, plums, and purple grapes contain the natural plant pigment called "anthocyanins." Anthocyanins have been found to protect cells from damage and reduce the risk of cancers and heart disease.

White fruits and vegetables such as: bananas, cauliflower, garlic, mushrooms, and white onions contain the natural plant pigment "anthoxanthins." Anthoxanthins have been linked to a decrease in cholesterol and blood pressure, as well as reducing the risk for

you plan for your fueling and hydration needs. Call or e-mail today for more information!

Add Color to Your Day:



Start the day with a berry smoothie! Blend blueberries, strawberries, blackberries and a banana along with your choice of milk or a non-dairy alternative. Add a scoop of protein powder along with flaxseed or cod liver oil for an extra nutritional boost! Snack on red bell peppers! These make an excellent substitute for the afternoon munchies. Try dipping in fresh hummus or Greek yogurt for additional protein. Making a salad? Forget the iceberg lettuce and instead toss together spinach, kale, red cabbage, arugula and romaine lettuce. Add "juicing" to your nutrition regime. What an incredible easy and convenient way to pack in 5 - 7 servings of fruits and vegetables. Kale, spinach, apples, berries, carrots, and ginger are just a few of the most popular ingredients used today. Not only do they make an excellent juice blend but they also provide a variety of color to maximize the nutritional benefits you get from this one drink! Swap the potato. The simple act of replacing a regular potato with a sweet potato will add more vitamin A, carotenoids, and fiber to your day.

Make a hearty sandwich. Next time you are going to make yourself a turkey sandwich, add spinach, red bell peppers, tomatoes, cabbage, cucumbers, shredded carrots, and sliced avocado for not only a more

stomach cancer.

Recipe of the Month: Blueberry Jicama Fruit Salad



A variety of colors and textures make this simple blueberry fruit salad perfect for summer picnics. If yellow watermelon isn't available, use mango, peach or nectarine for contrasting flavor and

color with the blueberries. Allow the mint to infuse flavor for about 15 minutes before serving.

INGREDIENTS

1 package (6 ounces) Driscoll's Blueberries
1 cup jicama cubes (1/4-inch)
1 cups seedless red watermelon cubes (1/4-inch)
1 cups seedless yellow watermelon cubes (1/4-inch)

3 tablespoons chopped fresh mint
Grated zest and juice of 1 lime
Fleur de Sel or coarse salt, if desired

INSTRUCTIONS

Combine blueberries, jicama, melons, mint, lime zest and juice in a medium bowl.

Stir gently to combine.

Let stand 15 minutes for flavors to blend, or refrigerate until ready to serve.

Serve salad in martini or margarita glasses, and sprinkle lightly with salt if desired.

Variation: Replace watermelon with red and green grapes cut in halves.

NUTRITION FACTS

Serves 6

1/2 cup = 43 calories, .5 gm total fat, 0 gm saturated fat, 21 mg sodium, 11 gm carbohydrates, 2 gm fiber, 1 gm protein

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nutritious feast but also a more filling meal!

Brighten up your plate with a pop of color. Watermelon, kiwi, or mango slices added to a meal of grilled chicken, steamed broccoli, and brown rice can do wonders for the overall appearance and presentation of your dinner meal.

Quote of the Month:

"Eating is not merely a material pleasure. Eating well gives a spectacular joy to life and contributes immensely to goodwill and happy companionship. It is of great importance to the morale."

- Elsa Schiaparelli

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About Kathleen Searles, MS, RD, LDN

I am a Registered Dietitian and am licensed to practice in Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Maine. The exciting field of nutrition has been my passion ever since I took a foods class with my friends in high school.

Through my work in different states and different settings I have developed my philosophy of helping people improve their diets by finding foods that fit into their particular routines, budgets, and preferences. I look forward to helping you solve your nutrition challenges with tasty and satisfying foods.