

Colourful Nutrition—Different Colors, Different Parts

Red and pink protects your heart:

Nutritional research shows red and bright pink fruits and vegetables contain phytochemicals that help your body to fight disease and promote excellent health. Watermelon, guava, pink grapefruit, fresh tomatoes, all belong to the red family. Other red fruits and vegetables, such as strawberries, raspberries, and beets help circulatory problems and make your heart stronger.

Green protects your liver:

Green fruits and vegetables are common everyday foods like avocados, green apples, green grapes, honeydews, kiwifruits, limes, green pears, artichokes, green beans, and cabbage. All have nutrients that protect your liver.

Black protects your kidneys:

Black beans, Chinese olives, black olives, eggplant, black berries, and black currants are all members of the black food group. These are good for your kidneys. Black beans are great for lowering cholesterol, as their high fiber content prevents blood sugar levels from rising rapidly after a meal.

White protects your lungs:

Garlic, ginger, jicama, pears, potatoes, white mushrooms, and white corn are all from the white family. These foods clear out your lungs and protect them.

Orange protects your spleen:

Oranges and tangerines, melons, pumpkins, and papaya all belong to this group. All of these orange foods have vitamin C and vitamin A which are good for your spleen.

Purple protects your brain:

Grapes, blueberries, purple cabbages, and onions all belong to the purple group. Purple fruits and vegetables are important for their antioxidants and reverse aging benefits.

Phytonutrients and Free Radicals

Phytonutrients are certain organic components from plants that act as antioxidants and detoxifiers, and these components promote human health. Phytonutrients—protective plant compounds—are an emerging area of health and nutrition, with new research being reported around the globe almost daily. The term “phyto” originated from a Greek word meaning plant. They also protect the plants from oxidants and toxins, both externally and internally. To get some of the very same protection and benefits the plants have, you want to include an abundant and wide variety of phytonutrients in your diet. The good news is that safe, consumable plants such as brightly colored fruits, dark greens, vegetables, grains, legumes, nuts, and teas are all rich sources of phytonutrients. These plant’s phytonutrients are able to work together with your own nutrients to build your body’s ability to fight disease and infection with their powerful antioxidants and healthy nutrients.

Key Fact: The key is keeping equilibrium in your body so there is an adequate supply of antioxidants to cope with your body’s production of free radicals, combine with them and render them harmless.

Phytonutrients:

- Serve as antioxidants
- Enhance immune response via cell-to-cell communication
- Convert to vitamin A
- Cause cancer cells to die
- Repair DNA damage caused by smoking and other toxic exposure
- Detoxify carcinogens through activation of enzyme systems

Foods high in dietary antioxidants:

- Hawaiian Spirulina, chlorella, and barley and wheat grass—numerous antioxidants
- Apples, and green tea—high in quercetin
- Grapes, seeds and skin—high in resveratrol
- Broccoli and cabbage—high in sulforaphanes
- Spinach, parsley, and kale—high in lutein
- Tomato—high in lycopene
- Blueberries, and cranberries—high in anthocyanins
- Oranges—high in hesperidin

As you can see, antioxidants are abundant in many fruits and vegetables, but they are also abundant in other foods as well including nuts, grains, poultry, and fish. Here are some more excellent sources of antioxidant nutrients:

- **Beta-carotene:** found in many foods which are orange in color, including sweet potatoes, carrots, cantaloupe, squash, apricots, pumpkins, and mangos. Some green leafy vegetables such as collard greens, spinach, and kale are also rich in beta-carotene.
- **Lutein:** best known for eye health, lutein is abundant in green, leafy vegetables such as collard greens, spinach, kale, and spring mix.
- **Lycopene:** a potent antioxidant found in tomatoes, watermelon, guava, papaya, apricots, pink grapefruit, blood oranges, and other foods. Eighty-five percent of the American dietary intake of lycopene comes from tomatoes and tomato products.
- **Selenium:** is a mineral, not an antioxidant. However, it is a component of antioxidant enzymes. Plants like rice and wheat are the major dietary sources of selenium. Brazil nuts also contain large amounts of selenium.
- **Vitamin A:** is found in three forms—A1, A2, and A3. Liver, sweet potatoes, carrots, milk, egg yolks, and mozzarella cheese are all rich in these forms of vitamin A.
- **Vitamin C:** can be found in high concentrations in most fruits and vegetables, and is also found in cereals, beef, poultry, and fish.
- **Vitamin E:** known as alpha-tocopherol, is found in almonds, wheat germ, safflower and corn oil, mangos, nuts, broccoli and other foods.
- **Folic acid:** has been shown to lower homocysteine levels in our blood. High levels of homocysteine damage the lining of our blood vessels. Green leafy vegetables such as spinach, kale, and collard greens contain folic acid. More dark greens, please!

Further study has shown the fruits and vegetables that come in rich vibrant colors, like tomatoes, carrots, spinach, broccoli, blueberries, and raspberries, are much more potent and beneficial than the pastel coloured produce like iceberg lettuce, bananas, celery, corn, and potatoes. 148 *J Collin Towers*

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