



**Week 4: Feb. 21-27**  
**Using More Fruits and Vegetables**

For the average adult, the daily recommendation for fruits and vegetables is approximately four to five cups a day. Four or more cups may seem like a lot of fruits and vegetables to fit into one day, but with a little creativity and preparation, it's very doable.

As you look over the Vitamin and Mineral Health Benefits chart below, keep in mind that there are many more fruits and vegetables from which to choose.

**Vitamin and Mineral Health Benefits**

<p><b>Fiber</b> .....</p> <p>The Institute of Medicine recommends a daily intake of 38 grams of fiber for men (ages 14-50) and 25 grams of fiber for women (ages 19-50).</p> <p>Fiber has many health benefits including a lower risk of certain types of cancer, obesity, cardiovascular disease and diabetes.</p>	<p>The skin and stringy parts of fruits and vegetables contain the greatest source of fiber.</p> <p>Vegetables: white potatoes (with skin), tomatoes, deep-yellow (corn) and dark-green (broccoli) vegetables</p> <p>Fruits: fresh bananas, citrus fruits (oranges) and fresh apples (with skin)</p>
<p><b>Folate (Folic Acid)</b> .....</p> <p>Folate, also called Folic Acid, is a B vitamin that not only helps the body form red blood cells, but also has a major impact on women who are planning on becoming pregnant or who are pregnant (during their first trimester).</p>	<p>Folate has shown to prevent neural tube defects, spinal cord defects, and anencephaly.</p> <p>Deep, green, leafy (foliage-type) vegetables such as spinach, asparagus and turnip greens are the best sources of folate.</p>
<p><b>Iron</b> .....</p> <p>Iron is important in keeping your blood healthy. A lack of iron can cause a condition known as iron-deficiency anemia, which is when the blood lacks an adequate number of red blood cells.</p> <p>Most people think of red meat as a source of iron, but iron is also found in vegetables and in some fruits.</p>	<p>Vegetables: lima beans, peas, avocados, kale, spinach, broccoli, summer and winter squash, potatoes, corn, soybeans and mushrooms</p> <p>Fruits: canned red sour cherries, dried apricots, blackberries, kiwi, strawberries, bananas and grapes</p>
<p><b>Vitamin A</b> .....</p> <p>To help keep your eyes and skin healthy, Vitamin A is recommended. It also helps fight infections</p>	<p>The deeper the green and orange, the more Vitamin A the vegetable will have.</p> <p>Vegetables: pumpkin, sweet potato, and carrots</p>
<p><b>Vitamin C</b> .....</p> <p>To help maintain healthy skin, strong immunity and excellent vision, Vitamin C is recommended.</p> <p>Most of us think of oranges or orange juice for vitamin C, but it can be found in other fruits and vegetables.</p>	<p>Vegetables: red/green/sweet peppers and broccoli</p> <p>Fruits: apricots, nectars, citrus juices and strawberries</p>

Sources include: MyPyramid.gov, Nutri Notes, and Fruits & Veggies.gov

Research shows that the different colors found in fruits and vegetables represent different compounds and nutrients. Nutritionists recommend incorporating a variety of colors in each meal. The handout, "Eat the Colors of the Rainbow," further explains the colors of foods.

# Eat the Colors of the Rainbow

## RED

Red fruits and vegetables, such as tomatoes, pink grapefruit, watermelon, strawberries, raspberries, beets and red apples, contain health-promoting phytochemicals. Deep red and bright pink fruits and vegetables contain substances that help reduce the risk of several types of cancer, including prostate cancer, and also contain antioxidants that help control high blood pressure.

## ORANGE

Sweet potatoes, carrots, pumpkins, winter squash, oranges, apricots and tangerines feature bright orange colors and are full of phytochemicals that help reduce the risk of cancer and heart disease, maintain good eyesight and boost immune systems.

## YELLOW

Yellow fruits and vegetables, such as corn, pears and pineapple, have many of the benefits of orange fruits and vegetables. Corn and pears are also high in dietary fiber which helps lower blood cholesterol and reduces the risk of certain cancers.

## GREEN

Green vegetables, like broccoli, spinach, collards, turnips and mustard greens and cabbage, contain antioxidants. Antioxidants fight poisons in the body that may lead to heart disease and cancer. Some antioxidants in these rich, green vegetables also help protect eyes and maintain good vision.

## BLUE/PURPLE

Some examples of fruits and vegetables featuring blue and purple coloring are blueberries, blackberries, plums, grapes, prunes and raisins. They contain substances that help reduce the risk of diseases including cancer, heart disease and Alzheimer's.