



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

Offering a wide range of colours in children’s food not only looks great but also ensures that children are receiving a great variety of nutrients.

Here are some healthy ways you can interest children into the marvellous, colourful world of fruit and vegetables:

Create your own Fruit and Veg Rainbow

A great way to keep track of the colours children eat each day is to create a fruit and veg rainbow poster. Every time the children eat a colourful fruit and vegetable they can place a corresponding coloured sticker on the rainbow or get them to colour in a small section on the rainbow. This is also a great activity that parents can do with their children at home.

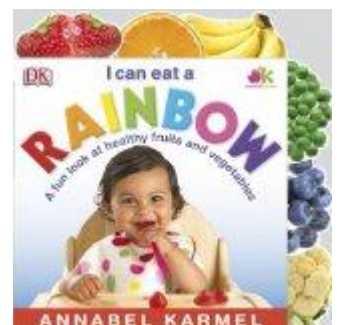
Create a Rainbow on Your Plate

Make a tropical rainbow fruit salad with fruits of each colour: oranges, strawberries, mango, rockmelon, kiwifruit, bananas, and blueberries.

Stir fry your own mix of vegetables using each colour: red onions, carrots, baby corn, broccoli and mushrooms.

Read a book – I can eat a rainbow by Annabel Karmel

I can eat a rainbow teaches kids how to eat healthily by enjoying a ‘rainbow’ of food, from purple plums to red apples to greens like spinach and celery. Each two-page spread focuses on food of a different colour.



Author: Nutrition Australia ACT Division, 2013