

## Color Your Meals For Optimal Nutrition

As you learn more about nutrition you may find the issue of eating an appropriately balanced meal to be a bit confusing. There isn't any, single super food that provides the body with all that it needs. Instead we need to nourish the body with balanced amounts of good, whole foods which provide a variety of nutrients and other beneficial nutritional components to promote good health. Amazingly enough, nature was designed to give us some clues. Many fruits and vegetables are color coded to help identify the types of nutrients found within. By striving to eat a more "colorful" diet, we can better achieve a balanced intake of healthful food and benefit from better nutritional support. Many of these colors come from antioxidants. These molecules have been shown to provide a cancer-fighting arsenal to the body as well as to potentially reverse some of the biological markers of aging when consumed regularly, and in appropriate amounts from quality sources. The antioxidant Lycopene provides a red color to some fruits and vegetables such as tomatoes. When the tomato is vine-ripened the color of the meat inside is a very deep red indicating higher levels of Lycopene than what is found in green-harvested varieties. Lycopene has been shown to protect the DNA from free-radical attacks which reduces mutation and incidence of cancerous cell development. An orange color indicates the presence of Carotenes which are converted to Vitamin A inside the body. Studies have shown that while chemically isolated Vitamin A supplements may exhibit liver toxicity at very low levels, carotenes derived from food have been shown to be safe even at very high dosages. Carrots are an excellent source of carotenes, but remember that cooking damages this antioxidant so raw, or lightly cooked carrots are necessary for optimal nutritional support. Yellow is the color of Lutein and Quercetin. These nutrients are beneficial for clear vision and good health of the retina and have also been found to have anti-inflammatory properties. They are found in corn, bell peppers, apples and pears, but are also found in many green, leafy vegetables like kale and spinach. Antocyanines are found in foods influenced by the purple color. These antioxidants are important for good blood circulation and health of the retina. Many berries are rich with this antioxidant and again they should be eaten raw for the best nutritional benefit. Finally a scarlet color comes from foods containing the antioxidant Beta Cyanine. An excellent source of this color comes from the beet and has an anti-anemic benefit to those who include this regularly in the diet. Adding more color to the diet can provide health benefits as well as create a more interesting menu. Colorful meals are more attractive which is probably what inspired our ancestors to add these foods to their diets in the first place. Be sure to "eat from the rainbow" and you'll greatly improve the balance of your diet in vital nutritional support.

## About the Author

Sports Nutrition Finally a diet site that offers nutrition information like no other site. Our site covers eating plans throughout.

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