



Color Your Plate

Healthy Living with Ellie Krieger

Picture the last meal you ate. Did you see an explosion of color on your plate, or was it a serving of paleness? If it's the latter, it's probably time to add more color by eating fruits and vegetables of many hues. When you do so every day, you ensure that you're getting a full spectrum of protective nutrients.

For example, **red** foods, such as red berries, red grapefruit, watermelon, red apples, red peppers, pomegranates, beets, radicchio, red cabbage, and tomatoes, contain lycopene and anthocyanins, which help maintain heart health, boost memory, keep your urinary tract healthy, and lower your risk for some cancers.

Yellow and orange foods, like apricots, cantaloupe, grapefruit, mango, papaya, peaches, oranges, pineapple, lemons, tangerines, yellow peppers, pumpkin, butternut squash, and carrots, get their color from carotenoids, which strengthen your immune system, help you maintain sharp vision, and lower your risk of heart disease and cancer.

Green foods, such as green apples, honeydew melon, green grapes, kiwi, lime, pears, avocado, asparagus, arugula, artichokes, broccoli, broccoli rabe, kale, collard greens, green peppers, green beans, lettuce, cucumbers, spinach, zucchini, and green cabbage, contain lutein and indoles. Deep green vegetables also supply plenty of key minerals and essential vitamins. They can help you keep your vision sharp and maintain strong bones and teeth; they can also help prevent cancer.

Blue and purple foods have anthocyanins and phenolics, which may have antiaging benefits. Try blackberries, blueberries, plums, grapes, raisins, eggplant, purple potatoes, and purple asparagus.

Many **white and brown** foods contain the phytonutrient allicin, which has been shown to aid in preventing heart disease and cancer. They also often have powerful antimicrobial properties. Try fruits and vegetables like bananas, dates, cauliflower, garlic, onion, mushrooms, ginger, parsnips, potatoes, shallots, and turnips.

Today, add more color to your meals and snacks. If you can add at least one choice from each of the color groups to the day's meals, you'll have consumed five servings of fruits and vegetables without even trying!