

PHYTONUTRIENTS

THE POWER OF COLOR



What are phytonutrients?

Phyto = plant Phytonutrients = plant + nutrient

- Substances produced by plants and believed to promote health.
- They slow the aging process or reduce risk of certain diseases.

What's in the color?

- Color pigments contain antioxidants.
- Antioxidants slow or prevent cell damage from oxygen.
- The deeper the color of the fruit or vegetable, the more powerful the antioxidant.



Where can I find phytonutrients?

- Fruits, vegetables, grains, legumes, nuts and teas.
- Look for color: Color indicates the type of phytonutrient found in the plant.
- Choose fruits and vegetables from a rainbow of colors to get the health benefits of phytonutrients.

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What do they do?

- Phytonutrients help you stay healthy and energetic.
- Protect against the effects of aging.
- Protect against the risk of some cancers and heart disease.
- May help protect against stroke, high blood pressure, cataracts, osteoporosis and urinary tract infections.

RED



Source of carotenoids and lycopene

- Maintains a healthy heart.
- Promotes memory function.
- Urinary tract health.
- Lowers risks of some cancers.

Found in:

- Beets, cherries, red beans, cranberries, kidney beans, tomatoes and watermelon.

ORANGE AND YELLOW



Source of carotenoids and lutein

- Maintains heart, vision and immune system health.
- Many fruits and vegetables are high in Vitamin C and folic acid.
- Beta carotene is the most well-known carotenoid.

Found in:

- Apricots, cantaloupe, carrots, grapefruit, yellow beets, yellow pears, yellow peppers and yellow winter squash.

GREEN



Source of lutein and zeaxanthin

- Lowers risk of some cancers, heart disease, maintains vision health, protects against birth defects.
- Keeps blood cells, bones and teeth strong.

Found in:

- Artichokes, asparagus, avocados, broccoli, cucumbers, green beans, green peppers, kale, kiwi, celery, spinach and zucchini.

BLUE / PURPLE / BLACK



Source of anthocyanins and flavonoids

- Lowers the risk of some cancers.
- Promotes healthy aging.
- Improves urinary tract health, memory function and heart health.

Found in:

- Blueberries, plums, blackberries, black beans, eggplant, elderberries, purple cabbage, purple grapes and raisins.

WHITE / TAN / BROWN



Source of sulfur compounds

- Maintains heart health.
- Lowers cancer risk.

Found in:

- Bananas, black-eyed peas, cauliflower, dates, figs, garlic, great northern beans, mushrooms, onions and peanuts.



How can I add phytonutrients to my diet?

- Keep ready-to-eat fruits and vegetables handy and visible.
- Add spinach leaves or tomato to sandwiches.
- Snack on fruits and vegetables.
- Top whole-grain cereal with blueberries, blackberries or strawberries.
- Try a variety of salad greens topped with several vegetables and chickpeas.
- Eat more whole grains.



Can I just take a supplement?

- Not a substitute for eating fruits and vegetables.
- Not absorbed as readily as nutrients from foods.
- The mix of antioxidants in food may give more powerful antioxidant action.
- Additional research needed on individual antioxidants and amounts needed.



This display was developed by: **Pattie Jones, SE Region Nutrition Program Assistant** Funded in part by USDA SNAP. Running out of money for food? Contact your local Food Stamp office, or go to www.dss.mo.gov/fsd/fstamp. For more information, call MU Extension's **Show-Me Nutrition Line** at 1-888-515-0016.

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