

Daily dose of color may boost immunity this flu season

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Hoping to keep the flu at bay? A strong immune system helps. Enjoying the bounty of colorful fruits and vegetables available right now can be an important step toward supporting your family's immune system this cold/flu season.

In addition to vitamins, minerals and fiber, fruits and vegetables contain phytonutrients, believed to come from the compounds that give these foods their vibrant colors. These phytonutrients provide a wide range of [health benefits](#), including supporting a healthy [immune system](#).

A new study, America's Phytonutrient Report, found eight in 10 Americans are missing out on the health benefits of a diet rich in colorful fruits and veggies, resulting in a phytonutrient gap. The report looked at fruit and vegetable consumption in five color categories, specifically green, red, white, blue/purple and yellow/orange, and the phytonutrients found in each color category.

Eating a variety of colorful fruits and vegetables is one way to help keep you and your family healthy. Foods in the red category are especially helpful to our immune systems, in addition to supporting heart health. Tomatoes, pomegranate, red cabbage, cranberries, even pink grapefruit provide the phytonutrients lycopene and ellagic acid.

The health benefits of foods in the yellow/orange category support a health immune function too...along with vision and heart health. And they help maintain skin hydration—important as we head into these cold,

dry months. These foods provide beta-carotene, alpha-carotene, lutein, quercetin and other phytonutrients that can be converted into Vitamin A. Delicious and nutritious yellow/orange fruits and vegetables available now include: carrots, squash, sweet potatoes and pineapple.

For optimal health, aim to eat two foods from each of the 5 color categories - green, red, white, blue/purple and orange/yellow - for a total of 10 servings each day. A few of Amy Hendel's favorite tips to help fill phytonutrient gaps:

- Instead of tossing out fruits or veggies that look a bit wilted or bruised, use them. Add chopped vegetables to canned soup. Bake cored apples with a bit of cinnamon, a sprinkle of raisins and lemon zest. Or, perk up a muffin recipe with by adding an over-ripened banana.
- When baking omega-3 rich fish, top with tomatoes, onions and other veggies, brush with olive oil and sprinkle with oregano, red pepper flakes and rosemary. Herbs and spices are packed with antioxidants too.
- Pureed fruit added to baking recipes gives moisture AND phytonutrients, while cutting fat. Try pureed plums in brownies and mashed cherries in meatloaf or hamburgers.
- Finally, while eating whole fruits and vegetables is the goal, a natural, plant-based supplement like those made by Nutrilite can help fill phytonutrient gaps in your diet.

Source: Weber Shandwick Worldwide ([news](#) : [web](#))

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