



HEALTHY DIET FOR YOUR TEETH? : EAT A RAINBOW

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BIODENTAL

Include colourful fruits and vegetables in your diet to maximize your nutrient intake...Each colour adds a different nutrient, so the mantra is to keep your meals as colourful as possible.

A salad of orange, watermelon and pear in summer. A side of beans, carrots, corn and broccoli. There's something about three or more colours on a plate that immediately lifts one's mood. But it's more than that. "The more vibrant the colour, the more nutritious the vegetable or fruit," says Mumbai-based dietitian and sports nutritionist Deepshikha Agarwal.

Foods get their colour from the phytochemicals present in them. "These phytochemicals are vitamins, minerals and antioxidants that are essential for the body, that are good for preventing and reducing the risk of various diseases," she adds.

1/- What is a "rainbow diet" ?

This visual cue, believes our dietitian,, is also nature's simple pointer to make sure you get different nutrients. "Everything that your body requires is colour-coded," she says. Anthocyanin, which gives blueberries their colour, also keeps your mind sharp and defends your body with antioxidants, while the lycopene that gives watermelons and tomatoes their redness, protects against prostate and breast cancers and fights heart disease. Beta-carotene, which makes carrots orange, keeps the bones strong. The yellow colour in foods boosts liver, skin and eyesight health, green detoxifies, and purple, which is rich in folic acid and potassium, strengthens the muscular and circulatory systems

Each colour adds a different nutrient, so the mantra is to keep your meals as colourful as possible. We suggest choosing three colours for each of the five-six small meals in a day. "The rainbow diet will detoxify your body and build immunity and strong bones," says our dietitian. But do remember that colourful refined or packaged items do not count. As far as possible, eat the vegetables and fruits either raw, boiled or cooked.

2/- RED

Bite into the juicy red of a tomato, watermelon, pomegranate, strawberry or apricot to get some lycopene in your system. "Lycopene is one of the strongest antioxidants. It protects against prostate cancer, cardiovascular disease and damage from ultraviolet light exposure,"

Anthocyanins, or the red pigment in fruits and vegetables, decreases the risk of muscular degeneration, stroke and certain types of cancer.

- **Go for:** Pomegranate, raspberries, red apples, cherries, red grapes, red pears, rhubarb, strawberries, beetroot, tomatoes, watermelon, red chilli peppers, red onion, red potatoes.

3/- ORANGE

The phytochemicals responsible for the orange colour in fruits and vegetables such as carrots, mangoes or pumpkins are carotenoids, says our dietitian.

"Carotenoids," she says, "help maintain healthy mucous membranes and healthy eyes, as well as help reduce the risk of cancer and heart diseases, and also improve immune system function. »

- **Go for:** Apricots, peach, oranges, kinnows, carrots, pumpkin.

4/- YELLOW

Include a lot of yellow pepper, corn and saffron in your diet if you have weak eyesight, says our dietitian. "Foods like avocado, which have both yellow and green in it, contain zeaxanthin and lutein, which are very important for retina health," she says. Other than improving your sight, yellow reduces age-related tissue degeneration and the risk of prostate cancer, and lowers LDL (bad) cholesterol and blood pressure. "Muscular strength, healthy bones and shining skin are what yellow gives, » says our dietitian.

- **Go for:** Papaya, lemons, mangoes, peach, pineapple, musk melon, figs, yellow tomatoes, corn, sweet potatoes, yellow beetroot.

5/- GREEN

Greens are full of chlorophyll, folate and iron, making them perfect for someone who needs strength. "These are a must, especially during pregnancy and post-pregnancy,".

The compounds that give green vegetables their colour are called glucosinolates, "which are a large group of sulphur-containing amino acid derivatives that help in reducing the risk of certain cancers", explains our dietitian.

In addition, green leafy vegetables also contain high amounts of iron and folic acid, as well as vitamin C, which is a strong antioxidant and an anti-ageing vitamin. "Green vegetables are good for your eyes, bones and teeth, and also help in improving immunity," says our dietitian.

- **Go for:** Cucumber, avocado, celery, green apples, grapes, kiwi, spinach, coriander, mint, lettuce, leek, leafy greens, okra, peas, beans, capsicum, cabbage, cauliflower, asparagus, broccoli, Brussels sprouts.

6/- BLUE AND PURPLE

The grape family of fruits, like berries, raspberries and cranberries, contains anthocyanins that reduce inflammation. "These and other nutrients like flavonoids, ellagic acid, quercetin, and lutein found in blue and purple foods support retinal health, lower LDL cholesterol, boost immune system activity, support healthy digestion and improve calcium and other mineral absorption," says our dietitian. Blue pigments in foods can also help reduce tumour growth and fight inflammation.

- **Go for:** Black currants, blackberries, blueberries, dried plums, figs, prunes, raisins, eggplant, purple potatoes, purple cabbage, purple carrots.

7/- WHITE

This one is outside the list of rainbow colours, but white fruits and vegetables, including apples, pears, bananas, cauliflower and garlic, are high in dietary fibre, protect against cholesterol and contain antioxidant-rich flavonoids such as quercetin, says our dietitian. "They contain health-promoting chemicals such as allicin, which helps lower cholesterol and blood pressure and reduces the risk of stomach cancer and heart disease," she adds.

Some members of the white group, such as bananas and potatoes, are good sources of potassium.

- **Go for:** White peach, brown pears, bananas, dates, shallots, onion, cauliflower, mushrooms, potatoes, ginger, garlic, turnips, white corn.

HEALTHY RAINBOW SALAD:

Brown: Half cup figs and dates

Green: 1 cup dark, leafy spinach, chopped

Yellow: Half cup pineapple, sliced

Orange: 200ml orange juice

Red: Half cup tomatoes, sliced

White: 1 onion, chopped, to sprinkle on top

Mix all the ingredients together, add a pinch of salt and pepper, and your rainbow salad's ready.



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