

# FRESH CONVERSATIONS

Iowa Department of Public Health

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Tips and tricks to add more fruits and vegetables to your diet!



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The benefits of muscle strengthening exercises

## Paint your plate with COLOR!

**The Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2020 recommends 2-3 cups of vegetables and 1 ½ cup - 2 cups of fruit per day.**

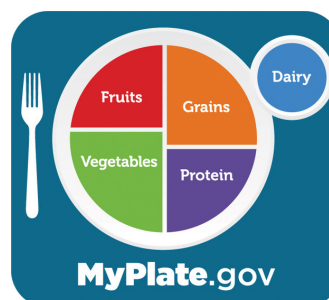
Have you ever heard the phrase “eat the colors of the rainbow?” And no, not the famous candy. We all know fruits and vegetables are a healthy part of our diet but let’s go even deeper. Among all of the other good things, colorful fruits and vegetables contain something called phytonutrients. These nutrients have potential effects that protect against cancer and heart disease. They also act as antioxidants in your body, a word you may be a little more familiar with.

MyPlate was created by the USDA to help Americans visualize what their plates should look like at meals. MyPlate recommends that half of your plate should be fruits and vegetables.

Many studies have linked a higher intake of phytonutrient-rich fruits and vegetables with a lower incidence of cancer. Carotenoids found in many orange colored fruits and vegetables has been linked with a lower incidence of breast cancer.

With an increased focus on fruits and vegetables, often comes a decrease in high calorie and high fat foods. Bonus - eating less saturated fats has been shown to reduce your risk for cardiovascular disease. Your heart will loove this!

In addition, eating a varied diet of different colored fruits and vegetables is important to help you scoop up as many phytonutrients as possible. So what if you don’t like beets or cranberries? The best part, you can choose another red fruit or vegetable to get similar phytonutrients. Eating the colors of the rainbow takes on a whole new meaning!



**Head to MyPlate.gov to learn more ways to incorporate fresh, frozen or canned fruits and vegetables in your diet!**

Source: [https://www.breastcancer.org/tips/nutrition/reduce\\_risk/foods/phytochem](https://www.breastcancer.org/tips/nutrition/reduce_risk/foods/phytochem)

Source: <https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/phytonutrients-paint-your-plate-with-the-colors-of-the-rainbow-2019042516501>

Source: <https://www.bjimp.org/content/phytochemicals-cancer-prevention-and-management>

# Where can I find the phytonutrients?

## Red

Strawberries, Cranberries, Raspberries, Tomatoes, Cherries, Apples, Beets, Watermelon, Grapes, Red Peppers, Red Onions

## Orange & Yellow

Carrots, Sweet Potatoes, Peppers, Oranges, Pineapple, Tangerine, Mango, Pumpkin, Apricots, Peaches, Corn, Cantaloupe

## Green

Spinach, Avocado, Asparagus, Artichokes, Broccoli, Kale, Cabbage, Brussels Sprouts, Kiwi, Green Herbs, Alfalfa Sprouts

## Blue & Purple

Blueberries, Blackberries, Elderberries, Raisins, Eggplant, Plums, Figs, Prunes, Purple Cabbage

## White & Brown

Cauliflower, Onions, Garlic, Leeks, Mushrooms, Parsnips

Source: <https://health.mo.gov/living/families/wic/pdf/phytonutrientsposter.pdf> Source: <https://www.fda.gov/food/buy-store-serve-safe-food/what-you-need-know-about-dietary-supplements>



## Get more fruits and veggies in your diet: Tips and Tricks!

1. Think in twos: Try to get 2 servings in the morning, 2 servings in the afternoon, and 2 at night.
2. Snacks, Snacks, Snacks! Try a piece of fruit or some sliced vegetables for a snack on the go.
3. Look for colors on the restaurant menu. Start with a cup of soup or a salad. Or see if you can add a side of vegetables to your meal. Try fresh fruit for dessert.
4. Shop local! Check out your local farmer's markets, or community supported farms. You may find some new produce to try!
5. Frozen produce can be a great alternative. When certain produce is not in season, frozen fruits and vegetables count and can be just as nutritious!
6. Add vegetables into your spaghetti sauce, smoothies, eggs, potatoes, or rice.
7. Think about your breakfast - add bananas, raisins, or berries to your cereal.

## Should I take a supplement?

*There is no easy substitute to eating fruits and vegetables. Supplements are not absorbed as readily as nutrients from food. There is a risk of toxicity of antioxidant supplements in large doses as well. Always talk with your doctor before beginning any supplements. FDA is not authorized to review dietary supplement products for safety and effectiveness before they are marketed.*



## How can I get my produce to last longer?

- Buy fruits and vegetables at different stages of ripeness and eat it as it ripens.
- Keep fruit where you will see it and remember to eat it!
- Don't wash vegetables until they are ready to use, they will stay fresh longer.
- Choose fresh produce that keeps well for a week or more: beets, cabbage, carrots, celery, kale, potatoes, apples, winter squash or oranges.
- Buy fruits and vegetables when they are in season, they will be cheaper and most flavorful at those times. You can even freeze most fruits and vegetables that you didn't get used!

Source: <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/antioxidants/>

Fresh Conversations is developed by: Iowa Dept. of Public Health [idph.iowa.gov/inn](http://idph.iowa.gov/inn)  
Iowa Dept. on Aging [iowaaging.gov](http://iowaaging.gov)





# How does cooking affect the phytonutrient content?

- Boiling: Cooking the fruit or vegetable for less time can minimize the nutrient loss. To preserve some of the nutrients, save the water that was used to cook rice or soup.
- Steaming: The minimal contact with water can help retain the nutrients. Lightly steaming can help improve the availability of the nutrients.
- Sautéing: Try to cook at lower temperatures and for a shorter cooking time. Also using a smaller amount of water can reduce the loss of nutrients. Using a small amount of oil can even increase the availability of certain phytonutrients.
- Roasting/Grilling: Compared to other methods with lower cooking temperatures, this method may result in a higher nutrient loss.
- Canning: This can increase the availability of lycopene from tomatoes, but can cause a loss of Vitamin C.
- Freezing: This method can result in a higher retention of nutrients. Any nutrient losses are likely due to any cooking prior to or after freezing.
- Drying: This method can result in the loss of most nutrients, but does retain fiber.

Source: <https://ohioline.osu.edu/factsheet/HYG-5581>

## Be Active. Eat Healthy!

This month, I will take action by...

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## Muscle-strengthening activities

Muscle-strengthening activities, otherwise known as strength training, is essential with increasing age. This type of activity causes the body's muscles to work against an applied force or weight. Typically when doing these activities you lift weights or weighted objects. But muscle strengthening can also be done using resistance bands or by using your body weight as the resistance. Muscle-strengthening activities build muscle strength, maintain muscle mass and preserve bone density, independence, and vitality with age. Activities that strengthen your muscles should ideally be done at least two days a week. These activities should target all of the major muscle groups: legs, hips, chest, back, abdomen, shoulders, and arms.



## Food Spotlight: Zucchini

- Zucchini contains more potassium than a banana!
- One whole zucchini provides about 25-30 calories.
- Be sure to eat the skin to get all of the benefits of the fiber!

How to Choose One:

- For the best flavor, choose a small to medium sized zucchini (about 6-8 inches in length and 2 inches or less in diameter).
- Try to find one with darker skin - they have the most nutritional value.
- Choose one that is heavy in hand and firm to the touch.

<https://fillyourplate.org/blog/fun-facts-about-zucchini/>



Need help finding a food pantry, free hot meals or community garden?

Call 2-1-1 for resources available in your area.



# Cheesy Pasta with Summer Vegetables



**Serves 6, 1.5 cups per serving, \$1.07 per serving**

## Ingredients:

- 4 cups assorted vegetables (zucchini, broccoli, peas)
- 1 cup grape or fresh tomatoes (chopped & seeds removed)
- 2 cups (about 8 ounces) whole wheat pasta
- 1 ½ tablespoons oil (canola or vegetable)
- 2 medium garlic cloves, minced or ¼ teaspoon garlic salt
- ½ cup onion, chopped (½ medium onion)
- 1 teaspoon dried Italian seasoning
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ⅛ teaspoon black pepper
- ¼ cup parmesan cheese
- ½ cup mozzarella cheese, shredded

## Instructions:

1. Wash and prepare vegetables and tomatoes.
2. Cook pasta. Drain water but save ¼ cup.
3. Heat oil in a large skillet. Sauté garlic & onion about 1-2 minutes or until soft.
4. Add any uncooked hard vegetables and cook for 3 minutes. Add soft vegetables and continue to cook. Add Italian seasoning, salt, and pepper. Add tomatoes last, and cook until warm.
5. Add cooked drained pasta to the vegetables. Add a little of the water from the pasta, if needed.
6. Add cheeses to the mixture. Stir until the cheese is nearly melted. Serve immediately.

**Food Safety Tip: If you are taking this dish to a picnic or BBQ make sure you use a cooler with ice packs to keep it at or below 40F.**

**Nutrition Information (per serving): 230 calories, 35 g carbohydrates, 7 g fat, 11 g protein, 5 g fiber, 240 mg sodium**

This recipe is provided by Iowa State University Extension and Outreach. For more resources like this, visit the Spend Smart. Eat Smart, website at <http://spendsmart.extension.iastate.edu>. Spend Smart. Eat Smart. is a registered trademark of Iowa State University.

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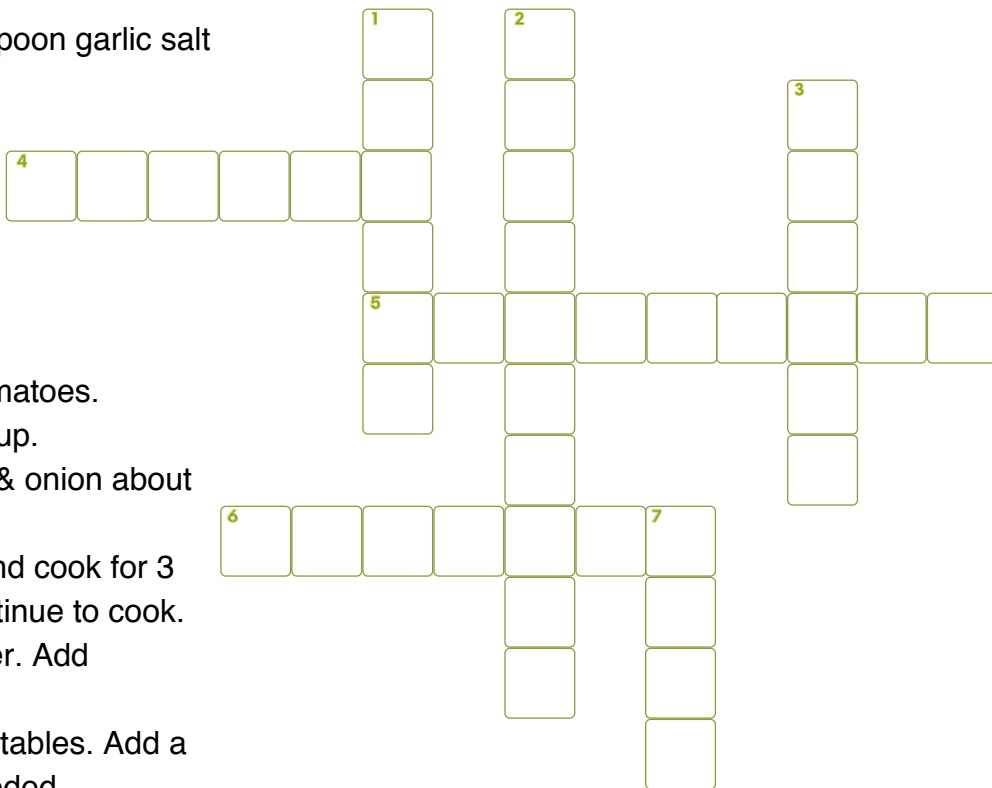
# Crossword Puzzle

## Down

1. Zucchini contains more potassium than a \_\_\_\_\_.
2. The Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends adults get 2-3 cups of \_\_\_\_\_ per day.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ can increase the amount of lycopene from tomatoes.
7. Be sure to eat the \_\_\_\_\_, if edible, to get as many of the phytonutrients as possible.

## Across

4. \_\_\_\_\_ produce can be a great alternative to fresh produce.
5. To preserve some of the \_\_\_\_\_, save the water that was used to cook rice or soup.
6. Activities that strengthen your \_\_\_\_\_ should ideally be done at least two days a week.



Answers to  
Crossword  
1. Zucchini  
2. Canning  
3. Skin  
4. Vegetables  
5. Frozen  
6. Muscles  
7. Nutrients