

Why Colors Are Good for Your Health

By Josephine A. Ann Aparte



Mitch was having a dream. In her dream she saw some vegetables and fruits coming to life and walking toward her!

“Hello, Mitch!” said the carrot, peachay, tomato, eggplant, squash, strawberry, pineapple, and guava. They were all smiling at Mitch.

But Mitch was so scared she tried to shoo them away. “Go away! I do not like you!” she shouted. Mitch did not like fruits and vegetables. Seeing a fruit or vegetable on her dinner plate always made her frown.

Mr. Carrot looked sad. “But why, Mitch?” he asked. “Don’t you know that we keep you healthy and strong?”

“That is right,” said Miss Squash. “Look at us. We are so colorful! Don’t you like our pretty colors?”

“What have your colors got to do with my health?” she asked.

Miss Tomato butted in. “I am glad you asked. You see, pigments, or coloring, protect the plants. But the pigments also protect you humans.”

“Yes,” agreed Mr. Pineapple. “The pigments that give us color belong to a class of chemicals known as antioxidants.”

Mitch suddenly remembered something. “The label on a ketchup bottle said that ketchup is rich in antioxidants. What do antioxidants do?”

It was Miss Strawberry’s turn to talk. “Well, we make antioxidants to protect ourselves from the sun’s ultraviolet (UV) light. If plants get more UV light, chemicals called free radicals will form within the plant cells. If free radicals are not removed, they move through plant cells and destroy parts of the plant. Antioxidants stop free radicals.”


Mr. Guava wanted to share what he knew, too. “So when you eat vegetables and fruits, you get antioxidants, too. These antioxidants will zap the free radicals you get from the polluted air you breathe or from the unhealthy foods you eat. Free radicals can make you sick!”

“That is scary!” said Mitch, trembling. She remembered she was not eating fruits and vegetables.

Mr. Eggplant hugged Mitch to calm her down. “Do not worry, Mitch. There is a way to avoid getting sick. What do you put on when you go to the beach to avoid sunburn?”

“Sunscreen,” replied Mitch.

“Eating lots of fruits and vegetables is like you are putting sunscreen inside your body,” said Mr. Eggplant.

“I think I will start putting more sunscreen in my body then!” said Mitch. 

Sources

Ask Dr. Sears: Too Many Vegetables? <<www.parenting.com/article/Pregnancy/Behavior/Ask-Dr.-Sears-Too-Many-Vegetables>>

Sarah Webb, The Color of Health. <<www.sciencenewsforkids.org/articles/20050302/Feature1.asp>>

The Colors of Health. <<www.5aday.org/html/consumers/healthcolors.php>>

Plate of Colors

Here is a plate of plain-looking foods. Color the foods that are healthy and good for you. Make sure to use the right color for each item.



Color-finding Mission



You will go on a color-finding mission. Your goal is to find vegetables and fruits in different colors. Where will you find them? In the supermarket or wet market (palengke)! Ask your mom or dad to accompany you. Do not forget to bring your notebook and a pencil or pen. Write down in your notebook the names of the fruits and vegetables you will find.

NAME OF FRUIT/VEGETABLE	COLOR