

Health & Wellness Newsletter September 2022

Fall Harvest Foods & Fun



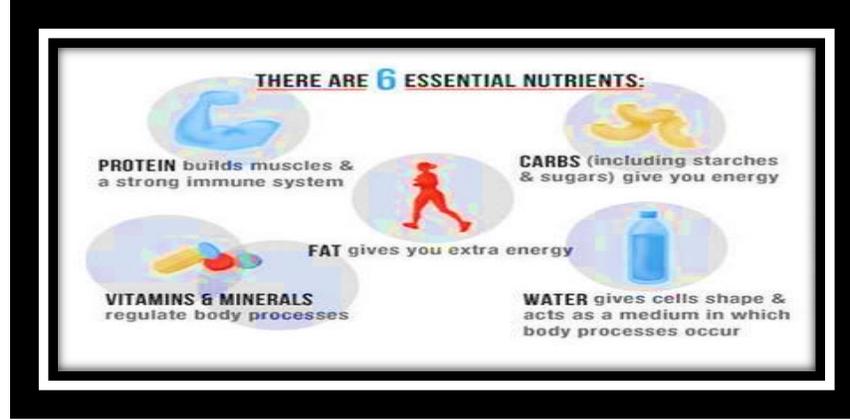
Autumn is time for harvesting fresh fruits and vegetables that provide significant health benefits and delicious meals. Some benefits of eating a diet rich in fresh fruits and vegetables is a lower risk of heart disease, stroke, certain cancers and other diseases. Dark colored fruits such as blueberries and cranberries are rich in anthocyanin pigments and are believed to lower the risk of heart disease and Type 2 Diabetes. They are rich in Vitamin C, are high in fiber & relieve constipation. Apples are high in fiber, rich in polyphenols called flavonoids and are thought to benefit brain health and potentially decrease the risk of developing Alzheimer's disease. Add pears to your salad and besides enjoying their flavor you will benefit from the high fiber, vitamin C and potassium. Colorful cranberries rich in anthocyanins are believed to reduce oxidative stress reducing free radicals that lead to diseases like Alzheimer's and Diabetes. Besides adding color they add a unique flavor.



Vegetables

All hail fresh fruits and vegetables! The health benefits of eating a diet rich in deep colored fruits and vegetables include more than disease prevention. Raw vegetables provide a cornucopia of vitamins, nutrients and fiber. There are however, situations where raw fruits and vegetables should be avoided. A condition that can follow chemotherapy cancer treatments is Neutropenia (low white blood cell count). White blood cells are a component in your blood that help fight infection. Some chemotherapy can lower your white blood cell count putting you at an increased risk for infection. This condition usually lasts about 4-7 days (this can be longer with blood cancers like leukemia). During this time raw fruits and vegetables, raw meat and seafood are best avoided because uncooked, they may harbor bacteria that can cause infection. However, if properly washed and cooked, the nutritional benefits and fiber they provide can improve healing, improve anemia and aid in digestion (Clegg, 2006).





The 6 essential nutrients humans must consume for optimal health include proteins, carbohydrates, fats, vitamins, minerals & water. Sources of proteins include animal proteins like red and white meat, dairy and fish, and plant proteins like beans and legumes. Carbohydrates get a bad wrap at times & Fats too but simple carbohydrates and unsaturated fats, in the right amounts, are necessary for optimal nutrition. Vitamins are divided into 9 water-soluble vitamins (dissolve in water in your body) including the B vitamins, folate, thiamine, riboflavin, niacin, pantothenic acid, biotin, Vitamin B6 and B12 and Vitamin C. Water soluble vitamins do not last long in your body and therefore need to be consistently ingested. Vitamin B promotes red blood cell production thus improving oxygenation and increasing your energy level. Vitamin B is present in whole grains, beans, eggs, seafood, poultry, green leafy vegetables and dairy products. Vitamin C acts as an antioxidant protecting cells from damage and is essential for the production of collagen which facilitates wound healing by providing structure for your muscles, bones and skin. Vitamin C is abundant in citrus fruits, bell peppers, broccoli, strawberries, cantaloupe and tomatoes. The fat-soluble vitamins (dissolve and store in fat) include vitamin A, D, E, and K. Vitamin A strengthens your immune system, is essential for vision, supports reproductive functions and promotes cell growth and organ maintenance. The two types of Vitamin A come from animal and plant sources. The body works hard to extract Vitamin A from plants so to get enough, you need to eat plenty of vegetables. Vitamin D combined with calcium helps strengthen bones, supports your immune system and helps your muscles to move. Most foods do not have Vitamin D naturally occurring but when sunlight hits your skin directly, your body produces Vitamin D. Vitamin E supports your immune system, prevents blood clots and acts as an antioxidant, helping to fight carcinogens and other toxins that may cause cancer. You can get Vitamin E from vegetable oils, seeds, nuts and green vegetables as well as foods that are fortified with it. Vitamin K aids in blood clotting, supports bone health and helps prevent osteoporosis. Essential minerals like Magnesium keeps your heart healthy but are only needed in trace amounts. Iodine is used by the thyroid to make hormones that control your metabolism. Consult your physician or a nutritionist for questions about supplements. Remember-whole foods provide the most bang for your buck for the essential nutrients your body needs.

<https://www.webmd.com/vitamins-and-supplements/ss/slideshow-vitamins-minerals-overview>
https://www.dietaryguidelines.gov/sites/default/files/2021-03/Dietary_Guidelines_for_Americans-2020-2025.pdf ; Clegg, H. & Miletello, G. (2006) *Eating Well Through Cancer*. Favorite Recipe Press.