

# Fruits and Vegetables Month

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## Fast Foods Make You Stupid!

Well, now that I've got your attention, you may really want to pay attention to what researchers at the Center for Aging recently discovered. It's not directly related to fruits and veggies but it is related to trans fat, a fat widely used in fast-food cooking because it extends the shelf-life of foods. Two groups of rats were fed a greasy food diet for six weeks, but one was high in trans fat, and one was low. When exposed to a water maze, the trans fat group made many more errors than the other group, especially as the difficulty of the maze increased. When they looked at their brains, the high trans fat group had fewer healthy proteins, and greater inflammation in the area of the brain responsible for learning and memory. These brain changes were identical to what researchers see in the onset of Alzheimer's. By the way these results were confirmed by researchers at the National Institute on Aging.

So now you have one more reason to pass on that fast food urge next time you're in the car. Drive right on by and don't stop until you reach that local produce stand! And students, if you're shoveling in the fast food while studying, you may soon have much bigger things to worry about than that upcoming test...

## A Taste of Summer All Year Long

Follow these simple suggestions to freeze some fresh berries when they are in season for a taste of summer when the winter blues are getting you down.

- Wash berries thoroughly while still fresh in order to preserve the most nutrients and best taste.
- To dry, use a sieve to drain water or pat gently until dry.
- You first should freeze the berries overnight in a single layer on a cookie sheet before placing them in freezer-approved containers. This helps prevent the berries from sticking together once thawed.
- Don't forget to label your berries with the date that they are frozen.
- When you're ready for them, thaw the berries for use in smoothies, jams, desserts, cereal and any other berry-friendly dish.



## Lunch Is In The Bag!

A recent study monitored school children's consumption of fruits, vegetables and whole grains through school lunches over five weeks. The results were telling.

### What did they find??

Parents were not packing nutritional lunches for their children. Based on results of this study, a program was implemented to encourage and educate parents on how to pack nutritious lunches and snacks.

After the program, the amount of consumption of fruits, vegetables and whole grains increased and children's cholesterol levels decreased significantly.

## "Eat the Rainbow"

As you add more fruits and vegetables into your diet, try to incorporate a wide variety of colors on your plate. By eating foods across the color spectrum, you will be ensuring that you ingest a wide range of nutrients to meet your body's needs.

Below are some of the common benefits that come from eating each color:

**Red** Reduce the risk of prostate cancer, lower blood pressure, reduce tumor growth and LDL cholesterol levels, scavenge harmful free-radicals, and support joint tissue in arthritis cases

**Orange and Yellow** Reduce age-related macular degeneration and the risk of prostate cancer, lower LDL cholesterol and blood pressure, promote collagen formation and healthy joints, fight harmful free radicals, encourage alkaline balance, and work with magnesium and calcium to build healthy bones

**Green** Reduce cancer risks, lower blood pressure and LDL cholesterol levels, normalize digestion time, support retinal health and vision, fight harmful free-radicals, and boost immune system activity.

**Blue and Purple** Support retinal health, lower LDL cholesterol, boost immune system activity, support healthy digestion, improve calcium and other mineral absorption, fight inflammation, reduce tumor growth, act as an anticarcinogens in the digestive tract, and limit the activity of cancer cells.

Sweitzer, Briley: *Lunch Is In The Bag: Increasing Fruits, Vegetables and Whole Grains in Sack Lunches of Preschool Aged Children*. Journal of the American Dietetic Association, July 2010.

<http://www.disabled-world.com/artman/publish/fruits-vegetables.shtml>