

Eating from the Rainbow & Food Groups

Take a walk down the cereal aisle and you'll notice that, like most processed foods, the boxes try to get your attention with colors, characters and other marketing techniques. As appealing as this may be, this food is not as healthy as farm-to-table goods. Fruits and vegetables have been "colored" by nature, not with additives and preservatives. While bananas, carrots, apples and beets don't come with a free toy, they represent the rainbow of colors that help keep our bodies healthy.

In Module Four, students were introduced to the importance of eating a variety of colorful fruits and vegetables. They learned how eating foods that are naturally bright in color helps our bodies stay strong and feel great. Students also learned about MyPlate, the different food groups and the importance of filling half our plates with fruits and vegetables. During the mindful tasting activity, children identified the color, texture, smell and taste of their food. Ask your child if they can remember the mindful tasting and what color their food was.

Helpful Tips for Eating Differently Colored Fruits & Vegetables

Eating a colorful variety of food within each food group is essential to good health. Fresh fruits and vegetables offer color variation and rich vitamins and minerals. They also contain phytochemicals, naturally occurring chemicals found in plants that have protective and disease-preventing properties. Here are some tips to help your family fill half of their plates with fruits and vegetables every day:

- Stock your refrigerator with brightly colored fruits and vegetables and place them in an easy to reach location.
- Serve fruits and vegetables with every meal. Try cutting them in fun shapes, or serve them with a healthy dip to encourage tasting.
- Make colorful smoothies with produce. Be sure to include leafy greens for maximum nutrients.
- Select one color each week and ask your child to name as many fruits and vegetables as they can of that color. Try to include the fruits they name into your meals for that week.

Family Reading Recommendations

A great way to be in the moment with your child is to read together. Look for children's books that effectively promote an appreciation for food and good health. The following books support the messages from this month's nutrition lesson.

- *Broc and Cara's Picnic Party* by Dave A. Wilson
- *Eating the Alphabet: Fruits & Vegetables A to Z* by Lois Ehlert
- *Jack and the Hungry Giant Eat Right with MyPlate* by Loreen Leedy
- *The Vegetables We Eat* by Gail Gibbons
- *I Will Never Eat a Tomato (Charlie and Lola)* by Lauren Child

Rainbow Kabob Sticks



Ingredients

For vegetables: red or orange bell peppers, cherry tomatoes and cucumbers

For fruit: honeydew melons, pineapple, tangerines, strawberries, grapes, oranges or mangoes

You'll need

Kabob sticks (popsicle, craft sticks or wooden coffee stirrers work well for little hands)

Directions

- Cut fruit or vegetables into bite-sized pieces.
- Have your child place the produce on a kabob stick.
- Enjoy!

