



## Weeks 3 & 4

# Fruits and Vegetables

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### During this 2-week segment:

Make sure each participant has their materials for this segment (Eat Your Colors handout), and email participants at least two messages each week relating to fruits and vegetables.

### Introduction to Fruit and Vegetable PowerPoint:

The average adult should consume between 1 ½ and 2 cups of fruit daily and 2-3 cups of vegetables each day. Consuming the recommended amount of fruits and vegetables provides a number of health benefits. A diet rich in fruits and vegetables may help reduce the risk for stroke, cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes and may protect against certain cancers. The potassium in fruits and vegetables may play a key role in reducing the risk of developing kidney stones and may help to decrease bone loss. Eating fruits and vegetables that are low in calories and high in fiber may also help individuals reduce their overall calorie intake to assist with weight loss and support the maintenance of a healthy weight.

Both fruits and vegetables are excellent sources of vitamins, minerals and fiber. They also contain compounds with natural, anti-aging properties. A nutritious diet combined with natural anti-aging compounds found in fruits and vegetables also contribute to a younger RealAge®.



### Suggested Enhancement Activities:

- An additional Power Point presentation on the relationship between healthy weight management and consumption of fruits and vegetables can be found on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at: [www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/nutrition/pdf/FruitVegR2P.ppt](http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/nutrition/pdf/FruitVegR2P.ppt)
- Have participants bring their favorite fruit/vegetable or an unusual fruit or vegetable. Then have a tasting party! Some suggestions for unusual fruits include kiwi, starfruit, and mango. You could also prepare a healthy fruit dip and/or vegetable dip for this activity. Recipes for both can be found on the Kids a Cookin' website: [www.kidsacookin.com](http://www.kidsacookin.com).

- Preparation of a fruit and/or vegetable snack would be a great “hands-on” activity for this segment. You may be able to get food and supplies through your School Food Service program or may even be able to get materials donated. Try preparing a fruit or vegetable-based recipe from the *Cooking the RealAge® Way* cookbook provided in your kit. Some possible recipes include:
  - Smoked Mozzarella and Veggie-Stuffed Pizza (make sure to cut this up into snack-sized pieces for everyone) p. 163
  - Donna’s Basic Guacamole p. 215
  - Succulent Ripe Berry Parfait p. 233
  - Sliced Peaches with Raspberries, Blueberries, and Chocolate Chips p. 237
- Try getting the whole school involved in this 2-week segment.
  - Elementary schools and child care centers could have a fruit/vegetable of the day/week or a fruit and vegetable tasting party where students learn about and try different fruits and vegetables.
  - Middle schools and high schools could promote cafeteria salad bars or offer fresh fruits/vegetables in school stores.
  - Visit K-State Research and Extension’s Kids a Cookin’ website for ideas on kid-friendly recipes (some of which can even be prepared in a traditional classroom setting!): [www.kidsacookin.com](http://www.kidsacookin.com).

## Messages to send to participants for the Fruit and Vegetable Section:

- Fruits and vegetables are just as much a feast for the eyes as they are nourishing to your body. Did you know that all of those colors actually provide specific health benefits? Red promotes a healthy heart and memory function; yellow/orange maintain a healthy heart, immune system and vision; green supports vision health and strong teeth and bones; blue/purple promotes healthy aging, memory function and urinary tract health; white fruits and vegetables maintain heart health and healthy cholesterol levels.

- Not sure if you’re consuming the recommended amount of fruits and vegetables? Develop a customized eating plan and track your eating habits online with the USDA’s MyPyramid nutrition-tracking website: [www.mypyramidtracker.gov](http://www.mypyramidtracker.gov).

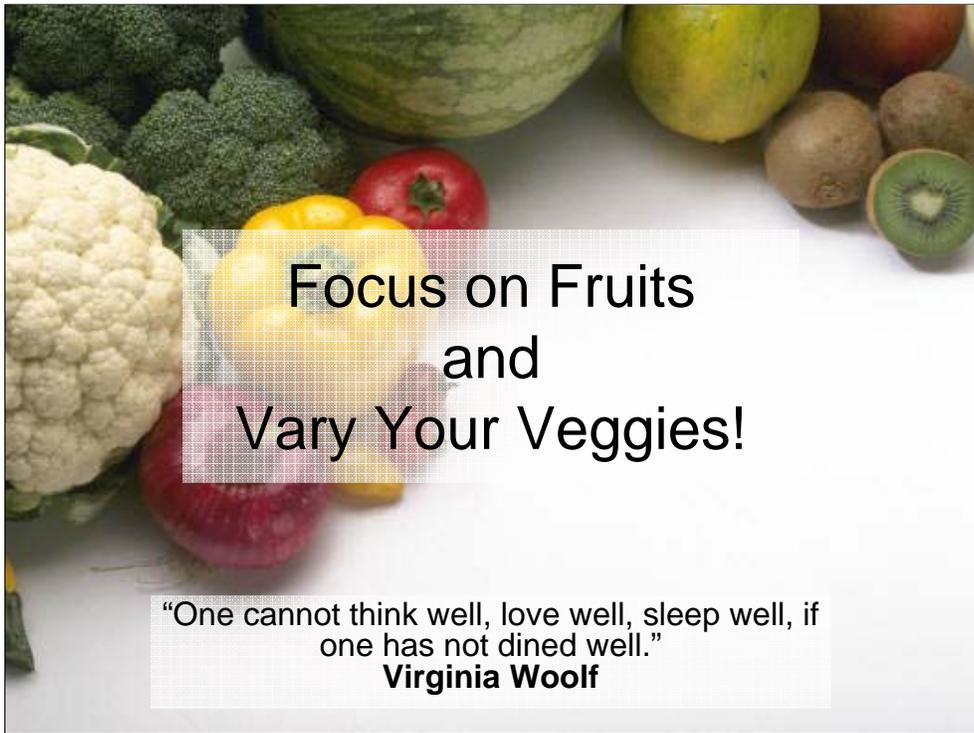
- Want to consume more fruits and vegetables but hate spending so much money at the grocery store? Try visiting a farmer’s market. Fruits and vegetables purchased at farmer’s markets are generally in-season, produced locally and are less-expensive than their grocery-store counterparts. To find a farmer’s market in your area, visit:

[www.ams.usda.gov/farmersmarkets/map.htm](http://www.ams.usda.gov/farmersmarkets/map.htm).



- Because most fruits have only 35-60 calories a serving, they are great low-cal alternatives to cookies or candy. Dried fruits contain considerably more calories in each bite, so be careful that you don't go overboard (a serving of dried fruit is only  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup!).
- When you eat fruit, make sure to wash it well, but keep the peel on (where appropriate). Peeling an apple or a pear removes nearly all of the fiber.
- Keep a stash of bite-sized, fresh fruits and veggies on hand for a quick, easy and healthy snack. Try baby-cut carrots, broccoli florets, celery sticks, cherry tomatoes, grapes, cherries, and small plums.
- Try steaming fresh vegetables with a little lemon juice or lightly sautéing them. Cook green veggies until they turn bright green to maintain as much of their nutrient content as possible. Better yet, snack on raw vegetables... they keep all the nutrients and fiber that cooking can deplete.





Focus on Fruits  
and  
Vary Your Veggies!

“One cannot think well, love well, sleep well, if  
one has not dined well.”  
**Virginia Woolf**



## MyPyramid: The Fruit Group

- Any fruit or 100% fruit juice counts as part of the fruit group.
  - Fruits may be fresh, canned, frozen or dried.
  - Fruits can be whole, cut-up or pureed.
- Examples of cup-servings of fruit can be found on the USDA's MyPyramid website:  
<http://www.mypyramid.gov>



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The MyPyramid Fruit Group contains, obviously, all fruits. What many don't realize is that also included in this group are juices made from 100% fruit juice. Keep in mind that the fruits you consume can be in any form including fresh, canned, frozen or dried. If you choose to consume fruit in forms other than fresh, watch out for added sugars which can add calories. A few examples of this include fruits canned in heavy syrup as well as some sweetened fruit juices.

Women aged 19-30 should consume 2 cups of fruit each day and women over the age of 31 should consume 1 ½ cups of fruit daily.

Men aged 19 years and older should consume 2 cups of fruit daily.

It can be difficult to determine how much fruit you are eating, especially if you are consuming fresh fruit. The USDA has put together a guide that can be used to help individuals determine a serving size for a piece of fruit. This guide, along with many other useful resources can be found on their MyPyramid website:  
[www.mypyramid.gov](http://www.mypyramid.gov).

\*to take you directly to the "what counts as a cup?" section, use the following URL:  
[www.mypyramid.gov/pyramid/fruits\\_sounts.html#](http://www.mypyramid.gov/pyramid/fruits_sounts.html#)



## MyPyramid: The Vegetable Group

- Any vegetable or 100% vegetable juice counts as a part of the vegetable group.
  - Raw or cooked; fresh, frozen, canned or dried.
  - May be whole, cut-up or mashed.
- USDA's MyPyramid encourages you to "Vary your veggies" in order to get the maximum health benefits.



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•The Vegetable Group contains all vegetables. In addition, all 100% vegetable juices are also included in the Vegetable Group. Vegetables can be raw or cooked and can be fresh, frozen, canned or dried. Ideally, try to consume as many fresh vegetables as possible, but frozen vegetables are an acceptable substitute. Frozen vegetables maintain their vitamin content better than canned or dried veggies. Frozen vegetables are also often less expensive so they may be a more economical option for individuals trying to eat healthier on a budget.

•The USDA's MyPyramid urges individuals to "Vary Your Veggies" in order to get maximal health benefits from this group, but keep in mind that variety is key when consuming both fruits and vegetables.



## Eat Your Colors!

- Each color of fruits and vegetables is actually a signal of the health benefits from that particular food.
- When shopping for fruits and vegetables or when making a salad for yourself or your family, try to include fruits and/or vegetables from several color groups.



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There are 5 basic color groups for fruits and vegetables. Each color provides specific health benefits when that fruit or vegetable is consumed. Essentially, the color of the fruit or vegetable is a visual signal that we can use to determine the health benefits of that particular fruit or vegetable. When you go out shopping for fruits and vegetables or you are making a salad for yourself or your family, try to include fruits and/or vegetables from several of the color groups in order to maximize your and your family's health benefits.

\*If any teachers are participating in Power Panther Pals, they may choose to include extra information about the health benefits of different colors to their students. This information is briefly discussed in the Power Panther Pals Implementation Manual in Week 5: Eat Your Colors.\*



## An ounce of prevention...

- Phytochemicals contain properties that aid in disease PREVENTION.
- Associated with the prevention and/or treatment of:
  - Cancer
  - Diabetes
  - Cardiovascular disease
  - Hypertension
- Phytochemicals have not been replicated by artificial supplements and vitamins.



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•I'm sure that nearly all of us have heard of the phrase "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure" and as research continues in the area of phytochemicals, it appears that they are the dose of prevention that we are all hoping to find. \*Refer to the worksheet emailed to you earlier this week for more information about phytochemicals in fruits and vegetables.\*

•Phytochemicals have been identified as containing properties that aid in disease PREVENTION. In fact, they are associated with the prevention and/or treatment of 4 of the leading causes of death in the United States: cancer, diabetes, cardiovascular disease and hypertension.

•The distinct combination of phytochemicals and other nutrients found in fruits and vegetables has not been replicated by vitamins and supplements that you buy in stores. Eating fruits and vegetables provides your body with the correct combinations of phytochemicals and nutrients in an absorbable and usable form. Some studies have shown that phytochemicals can stimulate the immune system, positively affect hormones and act as antioxidants.



## Health Benefits of Eating Fruits and Vegetables

- Reduced risk for stroke and cardiovascular disease.
- Reduced risk for type 2 diabetes.
- May protect against certain cancers.
- May reduce the risk of developing kidney stones and may help to decrease bone loss.

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Eating a diet rich in fruits and vegetables as part of an overall healthy diet may reduce risk for stroke, cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, and may protect against certain cancers. The potassium in fruits and vegetables may play a key role in reducing the risk of developing kidney stones and may help to decrease bone loss. Eating fruits and vegetables that are low in calories and high in fiber may also help individuals reduce their overall calorie intake to assist with weight loss and support the maintenance of a healthy weight.



## RealAge® Benefits of Fruits and Vegetables

- Fruits are an excellent source of vitamins, minerals and fiber.
  - A low-calorie alternative to unhealthy sweets.
  - Contain phytochemicals with anti-aging properties.
- Vegetables are high in vitamins, minerals and fiber.
  - High in anti-oxidants, anti-aging compounds.

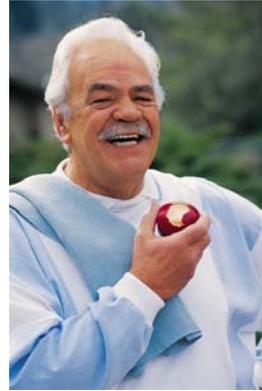
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Both fruits and vegetables are excellent sources of vitamins, minerals and fiber. They also contain compounds with natural, anti-aging properties. A nutritious diet combined with the natural anti-aging compounds found in fruits and vegetables also contribute to a younger RealAge®. In addition, eating fruit as an alternative to unhealthy sweets can also help to maintain a healthy weight. As we're all aware, maintaining a healthy weight is the first step in lowering your risk of heart disease, type 2 diabetes and stroke.



## Tips to Include More Fruit in Your Diet:

- Keep fruit in your house. You can't eat it if it isn't there!
- If you're too busy to wash and cut fruits yourself, purchase fruits that are already washed and pre-cut.
- Include a glass of 100% orange juice at breakfast.



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There are a lot of ways to help include more fruit in your diet. Several are listed here:

- Keep fruit in your house. Obviously you can't eat it if it isn't there!
- If you are too busy to wash and cut fruits yourself, purchase fruits that are already washed and pre-cut. They may cost a little more at the store, but for many, the time saved is worth the additional cost.
- At breakfast, have a glass of 100% orange or grapefruit juice.



## Include More Fruit in Your Diet

- Buy fresh fruits in season to save money and maximize taste.
- Slice fresh bananas, peaches or sprinkle fresh or frozen berries on your cereal.
- Purchase fruits canned in their own juices or light syrup to minimize added sugars.



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•Buy fresh fruits in season. By doing so, you'll take advantage of the lowest prices while enjoying the best taste. One of the best places to take advantage of this is to purchase fruits from a local farmer's market. There will be a little more information for you about that at the end of the presentation.

•Another option is to slice fresh bananas or peaches or sprinkle fresh or frozen berries on your breakfast cereal. This makes your breakfast more filling, more nutrient-dense, and helps you get those full 1 ½ - 2 cups each day.

•When purchasing canned fruits, make sure that they are canned in their own juices or in light syrup (heavy syrups add a lot of extra, unnecessary sugar to a naturally sweet food).

Other tips to include more fruit in your diet include: putting a piece of fruit, or an individually packaged fruit cocktail or applesauce in your lunch. For a snack, cut up fruit and dip in a low-fat yogurt or pudding for a healthy snack. Keep a package of dried fruits in your desk to fight off afternoon cravings. Just remember that you only need ¼ cup of dried fruit (equivalent to ½ cup of other fruits) such as apricots, apples, bananas, cherries, cranberries, prunes and raisins. Make sure that you wash fresh fruits before consuming them to remove any pesticides, dirt and surface microorganisms, and keep fresh fruits away from raw meat, poultry and seafood in your kitchen. For a complete list of tips, visit the USDA's MyPyramid website fact sheet: [http://www.mypyramid.gov/pyramid/fruits\\_tips\\_print.html](http://www.mypyramid.gov/pyramid/fruits_tips_print.html)



## Tips to Include more Vegetables in Your Diet

- Keep vegetables in your kitchen... frozen vegetables can quickly be cooked in the microwave for a healthy side dish at dinner.
- Buy pre-washed and cut vegetables to minimize prep time.



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There are a number of ways to get more vegetables into your diet:

- Keep vegetables in your kitchen. Try buying extra frozen veggies when they go on sale. Frozen veggies can quickly be cooked in the microwave for a healthy side dish at dinner.
- Buy pre-washed and cut vegetables at dinner. Just like the fruit, pre-washed and cut veggies are often a little more expensive at the store, but again, for many individuals the cost is offset by the time and energy that they save.



## Include More Veggies in Your Diet

- Order a veggie pizza with toppings like mushrooms, green peppers and onions... ask for extra veggies.
- Try to include a salad with your dinner every night and go easy on the dressing.



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- Order a veggie pizza with toppings like mushrooms, green peppers and onions, and while you're at it... ask for extra veggies!
- Try to include a salad with your dinner every night and go easy on the dressing. Make sure your salad is colorful: include things like red tomatoes, deep green spinach or leaf lettuce, orange carrots or bell peppers, other green veggies like broccoli and snow peas and even white cauliflower. Limit iceberg lettuce which provides little in the way of nutrients, and make sure that you keep toppings like cheese, croutons, bacon bits and high-fat dressings at a minimum.



## A Few More Tips

- Buy fresh vegetables in-season for maximum flavor and value.
- Plan some meals around vegetables like a vegetable soup or stir fry.
- Make raw vegetables more snack-friendly with a low-fat veggie dip.



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- Buy fresh vegetables when they are in-season, their flavor is at its peak and the price is more affordable.

- Plan some meals around a vegetable main dish like a vegetable soup or stir fry.

- Try a low-fat veggie dip to make raw vegetables more snack-friendly: raw broccoli, red and green peppers, cauliflower, celery sticks and baby-cut carrots are all great dipping options.

You can also try to minimize the amount of salt from canned vegetables by purchasing the low-sodium or “no salt added” varieties... even if you add salt later, it is probably less than the amount in the regular canned variety. Try a main-dish salad for lunch: if salads don’t seem to fill you up, try adding a greater variety of vegetables like peppers, broccoli, tomatoes and carrots, add grilled chicken, tuna or another lean protein to make the meal more satisfying. Make sure that you prepare and store vegetables away from raw meat, poultry and seafood and always wash fresh vegetables before consuming. For a complete list, visit the USDA’s MyPyramid vegetable fact sheet at [http://www.mypyramid.gov/pyramid/vegetables\\_tips\\_print.html](http://www.mypyramid.gov/pyramid/vegetables_tips_print.html).



## Local Produce

- Maximize flavor, freshness and minimize price by purchasing fruits and vegetables grown locally.
- Find local markets in your area by visiting the USDA's farmer's market website:



– [www.ams.usda.gov/farmersmarkets/map.htm](http://www.ams.usda.gov/farmersmarkets/map.htm)

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One of the best ways to learn about fruits and vegetables is to visit a farmer's market. There, you can learn from the growers themselves about choosing ripe produce, learn what and when fruits and vegetables are in season and learn about the farming practices of the growers. Farmers markets are great ways to support local farmers and your local economy. Produce found at farmer's markets is often more fresh and flavorful and less expensive than produce purchased in supermarkets. If you're interested in visiting a farmer's market, visit this website to find one in your area.



## Easy Fruit and Vegetable Recipes

- Kids a Cookin' recipes can be classroom activities
  - [www.kidsacookin.com](http://www.kidsacookin.com)
- *Cooking the RealAge® Way* also includes a number of fruit and vegetable recipes that can help reduce your RealAge®.



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Fruits and vegetables are great on their own, but sometimes you want something a little bit different.

- For a list of recipes that can be made into classroom activities, visit K-State Research & Extension's Kids a Cookin' website at [www.kidsacookin.com](http://www.kidsacookin.com). Teachers participating in this year's Power Panther Pals will already be familiar with the Kids a Cookin' program... it is incorporated into the weekly EAT SMART. PLAY HARD. activities.
- Included with your site's Power Panther Professionals kit of materials is a RealAge® cookbook called *Cooking the RealAge® Way*. These recipes not only provide instructions and nutrition information, but also give you information about the RealAge® benefits of each dish. For example, if you eat the Succulent Ripe Berry Parfait listed on page 233 once a month, by the end of the year your RealAge® will be 8.4 days younger! Not bad for a tasty dessert!



## What can I do?

- Include more fruits and vegetables in your meals and snacks.
- Consume the recommended amounts of fruits and vegetables daily.
- Track your eating habits online at [www.mypyramidtracker.gov](http://www.mypyramidtracker.gov) to see how your fruit and vegetable consumption compares to the USDA's recommendations.

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There are a number of things you can do to decrease your RealAge and improve your overall health:

- Include more fruits and vegetables in meals and snacks. We've listed a lot of tips in this presentation, but for more ideas, visit the USDA's MyPyramid website: [www.mypyramid.gov](http://www.mypyramid.gov).
- Set a goal to consume the recommended amounts of fruits and vegetables each day. Consuming the recommended servings of fruits and vegetables increases your intake of fiber as well as many vitamins and minerals. In addition, replacing other snacks with fruits and vegetables may also help reduce your overall calorie intake leading to weight loss or helping with the maintenance of a healthy weight.
- Need some additional support to get all your fruits and veggies each day? Set up an account with the MyPyramid Tracker. This free program allows you to enter the foods you consume as well as log your physical activity. You can see how your fruit and vegetable consumption compares to the USDA's recommendations and can track your progress toward your goals.



## Be a Healthy Role-Model

- Set a good example for children by eating fruits and vegetables every day with meals or as a snack.
- Encourage parents to bring fruits, veggies or 100% fruit juice to class parties.
- Offer raisins or other dried fruits instead of candy to students.



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There are a number of different ways for you to be a healthy role-model to your students:

- Set a good example by eating fruits and/or vegetables meals or snacks each day. Model the behavior you want to see in your students!
- Encourage parents to bring fruits, veggies or 100% fruit juice to class parties and celebrations. Visit the Kids a Cookin' website ([www.kidsacookin.com](http://www.kidsacookin.com)) for ideas for healthy, kid-friendly recipes that parents and kids can make together.
- Offer raisins or other dried fruits instead of candy to students. Try a trail mix that includes dried fruit as a class snack.



## Power Panther Professionals School-Wide:

- Get students involved by:
  - Rewarding students and teachers who get “caught” eating fruits and vegetables.
  - Organizing a “Bring a Fruit to School” day in your classroom or as a school-wide activity
- Farm to School Program:  
<http://www.farmtoschool.org>



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\*Optional last slide\*

As you can see, there are a number of different ways to get the entire school involved in this 2-week section.

- Try rewarding students and teachers who get “caught” eating fruits and vegetables. It may be in the form of bonus points for a Power Panther Professionals team, or stickers, pencils or other prizes for students.
- Organize a “Bring a Fruit to School” day... this activity can be found in the Popular Team Nutrition Events idea book included in your implementation manual. You may want to implement this activity on a classroom to classroom basis or even as a school-wide activity.
- Farm to school programs are popping up all over the United States and are working to connect schools to small, local farmers. Benefits of a farm to school program include awareness of where and how food is grown and shipped to schools as well as financial benefits to local farmers and the local economy. These programs are best developed in a school-by-school or district-by-district basis as each school’s needs differ and availability of produce varies from area to area. If you are interested in starting a farm to school program in your school, visit their website and meet with your foodservice director to determine the feasibility of this type of program in your school.
- If any students in your school are participating in the Power Panther Pals program (a health education program for 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders), you may have them put together a presentation about fruits and vegetables to share what they are learning with faculty/staff or even with other students.

Other great ways to get the entire school involved in learning about, trying and tasting, and preparing fruits and vegetables include: visiting the K-State Research and Extension *Kids a Cookin’* website: [www.kidsacookin.com](http://www.kidsacookin.com) for some great recipes that get children and adults cooking healthy meals and snacks. Rural school districts may take students to tour a farm or a farmer’s market. Urban school districts may ask a farmer to come speak to students or may take a trip to a local grocery store to learn about fruit and vegetable preparation, storage and selection.

## Eat Your Colors!



**Red fruits and vegetables** have been found to help maintain a healthy heart, memory function and urinary tract health. Examples of red fruits and vegetables include red apples, tomatoes, pomegranates, blood oranges, red grapes, radishes, rhubarb and red peppers.

**Yellow/orange fruits and vegetables** have been found to also help maintain a healthy heart as well as to maintain vision health and a healthy immune system. Examples of yellow/orange fruits and vegetables include fruits like oranges, grapefruits, papayas, apricots and pineapples as well as vegetables like carrots, sweet potatoes, pumpkin, and squash.

**Green fruits and vegetables** help to support vision health as well as help to maintain strong bones and teeth. Examples of green fruits and vegetables include kiwi, limes, honeydew, avocados, broccoli, okra, spinach, and collard greens.

**Blue/Purple fruits and vegetables** have been found to help maintain urinary tract health, memory function and they also promote healthy aging. Examples of blue/purple fruits and vegetables include purple grapes, black currants, blackberries, plums, purple cabbage, and eggplant.

**White fruits and vegetables** help to maintain heart health as well as healthy cholesterol levels. Examples of white fruits and vegetables include white peaches, bananas, white nectarines, potatoes, onions, jicama, turnips, and cauliflower.

The health benefits that we have just listed by color, are as a result of a number of factors found in fruits and vegetables that include vitamins, dietary fiber, and phytochemicals (pronounced FY-toe-chemicals). Phytochemicals are natural compounds found in fruits and vegetables that work with the vitamins, minerals and fiber found in these foods to maximize their health benefits. They contain protective, disease-fighting compounds. For a long time, researchers knew that these compounds were effective in protecting plants, but only recently have these compounds been recognized and recommended as protecting humans as well.

