

Put cancer **PREVENTION** on your plate

YOU KNOW THAT EATING FRUITS AND VEGETABLES is important for your overall health, but did you know eating lots of produce can also reduce your risk for cancer? The key is filling your plate with many different colors.



Tricia Sinek, RD

“The same plant chemicals that give different fruits and vegetables their colors also help protect your body against cancer,” said **Tricia Sinek, RD**, a Franciscan Cancer Care

expert. “Phytochemicals are naturally occurring compounds that protect plants, and they also protect your cells when you eat them.”

Different types of phytochemicals protect your body in different ways, so consuming a variety of produce colors is key for reaping as many benefits as you can. For instance, some phytochemicals suppress the growth of cancer. Others help your cells unload toxins that otherwise may damage the genetic

material inside of your cells contributing to cancer. And others strengthen your cell walls so they’re less prone to form harmful compounds in your body.

HOW TO EAT THE RAINBOW

“Ideally, you want to consume a minimum of five servings of fruits and vegetables per day with at least one food from each color group,” Sinek said. These color groups include:

- Purple and blue foods: grapes, beets, berries and eggplant
- Red and orange foods: tomatoes, peppers, apples, oranges and sweet potatoes
- Green and yellow foods: kale, spinach, broccoli, string beans and squash

In addition, consume plants that provide lots of aromas and flavors because they often contain cancer-preventing properties, too, Sinek explained. Examples of these plants include garlic, onions, herbs, spices, horseradish and olives.

GETTING STARTED

One of the best ways to increase the variety of colors, odors and flavors in your diet is by starting slow. “Choose one food from a color group for a day,” Sinek said. After a few days, add another color so now you’re getting at least two servings of brightly colored plants. Continue adding colors to your diet, experimenting with new foods and flavors to discover what you enjoy.

“It’s been shown that we eat with our eyes first. So if your food is beautiful, it enhances your enjoyment,” Sinek said. “At the same time, you’re reducing your risk for disease.”



Want to learn more about healthy eating? Visit [FHShealth.org/Classes](https://www.FHShealth.org/Classes) often to find a class in your area.

The three color groups

Aim to eat five servings of fruits and vegetables each day, and at least one from each of the three color groups.

Purple and Blue



Red and Orange



Green and Yellow

