**PHYTONUTRIENT QUICKTIPS HANDOUT**

**From the Institute of Functional Medicine**

**Serving Recommendations: 9-13 daily to prevent chronic disease and promote longevity**

* 4 servings (2 cups) of fruits
* 5 servings (2.5 cups) of vegetables
* A typical serving is only half a cup of cooked vegetables, one cup of raw leafy vegetable, or a medium-sized piece of fruit. Fresh and lightly steamed are best – but frozen, canned, and dried count too.
* Aim for 3-4 servings of plant foods at each meal three times per day. Make half your lunch and dinner plate vegetables.

**Herbs and spices have phytonutrients too! Ways to get more herbs and spices in your eating:**

* Add to smoothies.
* Drink unsweetened brewed tea throughout the day
* Combine finely chopped garlic and basil to extra virgin olive oil and lemon juice as a salad dressing.
* Add fresh herbs to all dishes at end of preparation. Sprinkle your dishes with parsley (all ethnicities), cilantro (asian, indian, latin) or basil (Italian) right before serving.
* Marinate lean meats in curry powder or curry pastes.
* Add cinnamon and/or nutmeg in smoothies and with orange colored baked squash
* Cook garlic and onions with choice of spices before adding steamed or fresh veggies for final sautéing.

**Here are some general cooking guidelines:**

* Red, orange, yellow, and green foods become more nutritious when **heated lightly and** **and eaten with some fat/oil (**carrots, spinach, mushrooms, asparagus, broccoli, cabbage, red cabbage, green and red peppers, potatoes, and tomatoes)
* Steam or sautee vs. boiling
* Cook only until color is bright and vivid (not browning)
* Cook to the point of making the vegetables tender and not soft.
* Soaking and heating foods like seeds, nuts, and legumes can increase the availability of phytonutrients and decrease the content of “antinutrients”
* The antioxidant content increases in the following foods when they are cooked:
* Overall, steaming is the preferred method of cooking since it results in the biggest increase in antioxidant content.
* Eat peels and skins if possible (as long as they are organic)
* Don’t pre-soak vegetables before cooking to make them soft as you will lose nutrients in the water.

**Here are some simple ways to jump start getting more phytonutrients in your everyday eating:**

* Stock up on frozen vegetables for easy cooking and using in smoothies
* Use the fruits and vegetables that go bad easily first
* Keep fruits and vegetables where you can see them on counter and in refrigerator so you’ll remember to eat them.
* Keep a bowl or container of fresh cut vegetables on the top shelf of refrigerator, within easy reach.
* Choose fruit for dessert (fruit kabobs, berry compotes, fruit salads, etc.).
* Choose darker vegetables over lighter to maximize nutrient content.
* “hide” veggies in one-pot meals and/or make them the “star of the meal” with meat as an accompaniment: stirfries, meatloaf, and sauces, etc. (using frozen veggies that you can pour right in often helps)
* Be generous with your use of spices!

**Easy Ways to Reduce Your Pesticide Intake:**

1. Do not over-consume foods that concentrate pesticides (animal fat, meat, eggs, cheese, milk).

2. Buy organically-grown produce.

3. Try to buy local produce, in season.

**SUMMARY**

**6 Steps to Getting More Phytonutrients**

Food is more than nutrition. It’s essential to have optimal amounts of phytonutrients and to be nourished through the power of yum, joy of cooking and eating, and the courage to be creative while increasing control of our food supply and meal preparation.

**1-Aim for 9-13 Servings of Plant Foods Everyday**

We need about 9-13 servings of whole plant foods if we want to prevent chronic disease. A typical serving is only half a cup of cooked vegetables, one cup of raw leafy vegetable, or a medium-sized piece of fruit. It would be best to aim for every meal of the day to have about 3-4 servings of plant foods so that at three general meals per day (not including snacks), you would make your serving requirement on a daily basis.

**2-Know Your Phytonutrient Sources**

Phytonutrient-rich eats are limitless, making it fun to experiment with new varieties and colors even within one category of food. Here are some sources of phytonutrients to get you started: any and all plant foods, including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, legumes, nuts, seeds, and even herbs and spices.

**3-Eat the Rainbow of Colors**

Make it your goal to get the full seven colors every day with a variety of foods.

**4-Vary Your Choices**

Mix it up and try new foods so you don’t get in a food rut!

**5-Maximize Combinations**

When we put certain foods together, we may achieve a better effect than if we just had the foods by themselves. Sometimes, there can be a “synergistic” result from combining certain foods. For example, putting turmeric with black pepper together with olive oil could enhance the phytonutrient effects of all three foods on your health. Adding lemon juice to spinach could help the iron become more absorbed by your body.

**6-Be Creative with Substitutions – “trade up” to improve food quality!**

Replace colorless foods with colorful, nutrient-dense options. For example, you could substitute mashed potatoes with mashed purple potatoes or sweet potatoes. You could substitute white rice with purple, brown, or black rice.