



EAT THE RAINBOW ACTIVITY

VITAMIN C & IMMUNITY

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Choose at least 1 food item from each color category

- (Red) Strawberries, cherries, watermelon, or raspberries
- (Orange) Oranges, apricots, carrots or peaches
- (Yellow) Banana, mango, or pineapple
- (Green) Kiwi, granny smith apple, or grapes
- (Blue) Blueberry, or acai,
- (indigo) Blackberries, boysenberries, dark cherries, or plums
- (Violet) Purple grapes, guava, or elderberries

Vitamin C is one of the more commonly known Vitamins by many people. Its importance was initially discovered by James Lind in 1747 when he recognized that sailors who were on the sea for long stretches, and eating primarily rice and other nonperishable staples were getting something called scurvy. Scurvy caused bleeding gums and nonhealing wounds as well as other immune-related issues. He later found that by adding lemon juice to their diet, he could prevent these issues. Thus the importance of vitamin c was discovered.

Thanks to more current research, we now know even more about the role of Vitamin C within the body. Its importance to the immune system continues to be key. Children ages 4 to 8 years need about 25/ mg. per day. This is surprisingly easy to meet from diet alone if a child is getting regular access to a variety of fruits and vegetables each day. One clementine contains about 36 mg of vitamin C alone!

Activity

- Print a large photo of a rainbow, place inside a sheet protector.
- Wash/cut fruit into small pieces, put each color on a different plate.
- Let them pick their own fruit from each color and trace the rainbow with the fruit.
- Encourage them to taste, touch, and smell the fruit.
- Let them have fun and get creative, the more fruit they try, the better!

The Immune System

Vitamin C is highly concentrated in our immune cells and is used rapidly during infection. It is also a strong antioxidant that helps reduce damage to our cells caused by free radicals (the bad guys.) Ensuring your child is eating a wide variety of fruits and vegetables will help them maintain proper levels of vitamin C (supplementation is rarely needed!) Some fruits and vegetables high in Vitamin C are strawberries, oranges, grapes, kiwi, and carrots.

Supplementation & Colds

While many turn to Vitamin C supplements during cold season, research shows that taking extra Vitamin C (above your body's need) will likely not reduce the risk of catching a common cold. Getting adequate levels from food is the best way to keep your body protected year around.