



Good Bye Flu Season! Get Your Healthy On!

March 24, 2015

Cathy Mazanec, MS, RDN, CSSD, LDN

Thank goodness, winter is behind us! Hopefully it took all the germs with it. I hope you were able to dodge the cold and flu bullets this winter. If not, now's the time to give your body, immune system and eating plan a refreshing kick start. Starting today, build these tips into your daily living for a healthy remainder of 2015.

Spring Clean Your Eating Plan

Along with longer days and warmer temps, Spring brings us fresh new produce!

RED

- New potatoes
- Radishes
- Strawberries
- Sweet Cherries

ORANGE

- Apricots
- Carrots
- Mangos
- Navel Oranges (end of season)

YELLOW/WHITE/BROWN

- Cauliflower
- Garlic
- Leeks
- Morel Mushrooms
- Peanuts
- Summer Squash
- Sweet Onion
- Turnips

GREEN

- Artichokes
- Arugula
- Asparagus
- Broccoli
- Cabbage
- Collard Greens
- Fava Bean
- Green Onions/Scallions
- Lettuce
- Mint
- Okra
- Parsley
- Peas— Garden, Snap, Snow
- Spinach
- Swiss Chard

BLUE/INDIGO/VIOLET

- Beets
- Blueberries
- Plums

One of the best things you can do to boost your health and immunity is eat lots of brightly-colored, low carb vegetables (4 – 5 cups) and a few deep colored fruits (2 servings) daily. To put it another way, strive to eat the colors of the rainbow every day (that means **ROY G BIV** to your kids).

Nutrition research continues to reveal that colorful vegetables and fruits are loaded with powerful antioxidants, phytonutrients, vitamins and minerals that squelch inflammation, boost immunity and power up our metabolic pathways right down to the mitochondria of our cells. The result - When our bodies are fed well they run like well oiled machines.

Here are the bright colors of Spring that will be coming to a farmer's market or supermarket near you. Pick your favorites then stretch yourself and try some new ones this year.

Don't know how to prepare vegetables?

Check out these amazingly delicious vegetable recipes to get you started:

- [Roasted Broccoli](#)
- [Roasted Asparagus](#)
- [Roasted Brussels Sprouts](#)
- [Sautéed Swiss Chard](#)
- [Roasted Butternut Squash](#)
- [Roasted Tomatoes](#)
- [Sautéed Spinach](#)
- [Zucchini and Carrot "Fries"](#)
- [Detox Salad](#)
- [Kale, Sesame and Ginger Salad](#)
- [Curried Cauliflower Soup](#)
- [Zoodles](#)

Pull Out Your Slow Cooker

We all know home cooked meals offer us much healthier options than eating away from home. But when the weather gets nice, I want to be outdoors! As much as I love to cook, I prefer riding my bike, paddle boarding or hanging out with my family on the beach. So, a perfect way to balance my outdoor playtime with healthy eating is to make meals in my crock pot. Unlike many folks, I use my crock pot more in the spring and summer than in the winter.

There is no better feeling than coming home from an afternoon of kayaking on the lake to a luscious hot meal in my crock pot. Pair it with a side salad and a bowl of fresh fruit and you're sitting down to a healthy, home cooked meal in 5 minutes.

Need help mastering slow cooking? [Click here](#) for some quick, easy 5 Ingredients or Less crock pot recipes.

Drink, Drink, Drink Plenty of Clean Water

If you haven't yet ramped up your water-drinking habit, now is a good time to start. Water helps our liver, kidneys and skin flush out waste products that we've accumulated through normal metabolism and from pesticides and toxins we eat, drink and breathe.

Nutritionists and researchers continue to debate about what our optimal daily hydration goal should be but a good general rule is:

Drink ½ your body weight in ounces of clean water daily.

And notice, I mentioned "clean" water. Recent research suggests that water stored in plastic bottles may be carrying plasticizers that have leached into the water when the bottles get hot during storage. If you have access to filtered water, this is a great option. And, drink your filtered water from glass or stainless steel bottles instead of plastic. There's no need to consume plastic if you can avoid it.

For safe drinking bottle options, check out these [glass](#) and [stainless steel](#) bottles.

Catch your ZZZZs

You hear this often and this news is not going away. Our bodies detox at night so if you're not sleeping, you're not detoxing well. The National Sleep Foundation has just released new sleep recommendations for different age groups. For most adults, 7 to 9 hours of sleep per night is recommended.

[Click here](#) to review the National Sleep Foundation's sleep recommendations by age group.

For more information on sleeping and sleep cycle regulation, check out the [A to Zzz's of Sleep](#).

Get some form of exercise or movement every day

And, try to exercise outdoors whenever possible. Watch sun times and pollen counts to know when it's safest for you. Exercising outdoors can give you multiple benefits. A few studies have shown that those who exercise outdoors work out longer and enjoy it better than exercising in a gym.