

Ask Leyla: Eat the rainbow



Q: How can I ensure that I'm getting the most nutrition possible from my food?

A: The digestion and absorption of the nutrition from your foods depends on the health and well-being of your gastrointestinal tract, microbiota, and any medications you're taking that have the potential to impede that.

Choose the cleanest produce possible—organic and local, fresh or frozen. I don't know why frozen vegetables get such a bad rap. They retain more nutrients than fresh ones that have traveled long distances. Then make it a habit to "eat the rainbow" every day to ensure you're getting the benefits of all the antioxidants and phytonutrients contained in your produce: The dark and medium green leafy vegetables like spinach, chard, arugula, watercress, romaine, butter, and gem lettuces. Broccoli (choose the freshest with its blue hue), Brussels sprouts, cabbage, and kohlrabi add more green varieties. Orange colors from carrots, squash, sweet potatoes, and peppers. Red colors from tomatoes, peppers, beets, and radishes. More greens, yellows, and whites from squash, golden beets, cauliflower, radish, cucumber, and zucchini. Don't forget herbs like cilantro, dill, and parsley. Get blues, blacks, reds, and oranges from berries, pomegranates, plums, and citrus—in addition to all the other colors of fruits in season. No produce is off-limits!

Choose the cleanest possible protein—organic, pastured, grass-fed when choosing beef, lamb, pork, bison, or wild game; poultry like chicken, turkey, duck, and eggs. *Wild and organic seafood only*, like salmon, flounder, trout, cod, haddock, sardines, and anchovies.

If you're eating dairy, choose only the full-fat versions of cheese and yogurt. Yogurt should be unflavored—not even vanilla.

Choose among all the nuts and seeds such as almonds, walnuts, Brazil nuts, filberts, pecans, pistachios, sunflower and pumpkin seeds.

Our soil is not as nutrient-dense as it was a couple hundred years ago. Therefore, it's critical to take at the very least, a multivitamin and mineral formula as well as vitamin D.

To your health!