# Color Your Plate Challenge

**Minneapolis Heart Institute Foundation®**

Creating a world without heart and vascular disease

An eight-week challenge to eat five or more fruits and vegetables every day!

# What's inside:

# Welcome to the Color Your Plate Challenge

The Minneapolis Heart Institute Foundation® wants to help everyone make healthier lifestyle changes. Eating more fruits and vegetables can be a great way to start! We invite you to take our Color Your Plate Challenge to **eat more fruits and vegetables every day**.

In this booklet, you'll:

- Learn how eating fruits and vegetables, in a variety of colors, can help your heart health.
- Discover tips from other people who are successfully eating more fruits and vegetables.
- Track how many fruits and vegetables you eat every day for eight weeks.

In the United States, only 1 in 10 adults eat five or more servings of fruits and vegetables.

**Fact:** Scientists estimate that if all Americans ate at least five servings of fruits and vegetables a day, one in three heart attacks would be eliminated.

# Why eat more fruits and vegetables?

Fruits and vegetables are nature's nutritional powerhouses. They are excellent sources of vitamins, minerals and fiber — and they are low in sodium and calories. So not only does eating an abundance of fruits and vegetables help your heart, they keep you feeling energized and can also help trim your waistline if needed.

**or more servings a day!**

■ **Aim to eat at least five servings of fruits and vegetables a day with your meals and snacks.**
If you have trouble fitting that many in, make a list of all the fruits and vegetables you already like. Then set a goal to try at least one new one each week until you are up to at least five servings a day.

■ **Prepare ahead of time to make it easier to get your five a day in.** For example:
- Keep a basket of fresh, washed fruits handy on your kitchen table for a snack.
- Move fruits and vegetables to the top drawers of your refrigerator for easier visibility.
- Wash and cut up fruits and vegetables in advance for easy additions to meals.
- Challenge yourself to find recipes that feature vegetables (or fruit) as the main entrée ingredient. Prepare these meals for supper at least two nights a week.

# Count the colors in your meals and add more!

To keep your heart healthy, your body needs a variety of essential nutrients. How do you know if you are getting enough of these nutrients from what you eat?

Start by counting the colors in your meals — then add more! Colors count when they come from nature; artificial colors simply don't count. Each day, try to include plenty of color in your meals and snacks — such as red, yellow, orange, green, blue, purple, brown, beige and white. This maximizes the nutrition you get from fruits and vegetables.

## Examples of colorful foods you can add to your plate and how they support heart health:

**Red (antioxidants)** — protects blood vessels and potentially improves memory. Examples: tomatoes, strawberries, red apples, cherries, radishes and kidney beans.

**Orange / Yellow (carotenoids)** — provides anti-cancer and anti-oxidant benefits, improves vision and heart health. Examples: oranges, carrots, yellow or orange bell pepper, sweet potatoes, apricots, pumpkins, squash and grains.

**Green (phytochemicals)** — reduces inflammation. Examples: spinach and dark green leafy greens, broccoli, green cabbage, asparagus, peas, kiwi, green bell pepper and green beans.

**Blue (anti-aging properties)** — protects against damage to blood vessels, cartilage, tendons and ligaments; helps with memory function and urinary tract health. Examples: eggplant, blueberries, plums, red grapes and blackberries.

# A day in the life of a five+-a-day-eater



**Breakfast:** Two pieces whole-wheat toast
topped with peanut butter and sliced bananas

**Morning snack:** Low-fat yogurt topped with fresh blueberries

**Lunch:** Whole-grain pita with turkey and sliced avocado,
spinach salad with tomatoes and light vinaigrette dressing

**Afternoon snack:** Orange

**Dinner:** Chicken stir-fry with mixed vegetables

**Total fruits and vegetables = 5+**

# Simple tips for eating fruits and vegetables



The chart below provides helpful tips on which fruits and vegetables give you the best nutritional value.

| Choose more often | Choose less often |
|---|---|
| Fresh or frozen fruits , unsweetened applesauce | Frozen fruits (with sugar added) |
| Canned fruits packed in water or natural juices | Canned fruits in heavy syrup |
| Frozen vegetables | Vegetables with butter or creamy sauces, fried or breaded vegetables |
| Low-sodium canned vegetables | Canned vegetables with added salt |

- Eat a fruit or vegetable at every meal.
- Add fruit to cereal for breakfast; a vegetable or fruit side salad to lunch.
- Stack your sandwich with more vegetables, like tomato slices or onions.
- Snack on raw vegetables instead of potato chips.

# Try eating the Mediterranean way!

Researchers have studied how people around the world eat and found that individuals who live in countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea follow a general pattern of eating that lowers their LDL cholesterol (the "bad" cholesterol) and improves their overall heart health.

You might be familiar with some of the more common principles of the diet — such as cooking with olive oil or perhaps you've heard drinking a glass of red wine might help your heart — but there's more to it than that. In fact, one of the cornerstones of a Mediterranean eating plan is eating a generous amount of fruits and vegetables!

Here are the other characteristics of the eating plan:

- Getting plenty of activity and eating meals with family and friends
- Eating healthy fats, such as olive oil and canola oil
- Using herbs and spices instead of salt to flavor foods
- Eating small portions of nuts
- Drinking red wine, in moderation
- Eating limited amounts of red meat, usually reserved for special occasions
- Eating fish at least twice a week


Shown here: Fish tacos with vegetables

# How many servings of fruits and vegetables do YOU eat? Track your numbers for eight weeks!

The following pages contain a tracking log for each week. Here's what to do:

1. Every day, simply put a checkmark (✔) in a box in the "Servings of Fruits or Vegetables" column every time you eat a serving of fruits or vegetables for a meal or a snack.

2. Your goal is five servings of fruits or vegetables a day. These servings can be all fruit, all vegetable, or preferably a mixture of both.

3. In the "Colors" column, put a checkmark next to all the colors of fruits or vegetables you ate that day. The more colors, the better!

4. Total up your checkmarks for the day and see how many days you eat five servings or more!

## SAMPLE tracking day

| | Day | Servings of Fruits or Vegetables ( ✔ = 1) | Daily Total (Aim for 5 or more a day) | Colors of Fruits or Vegetables | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | Monday | ☑☑☑☑ ☑☐☐☐ | 5 | Green ☑ Purple ☐ | Yellow ☑ Orange ☐ | Red ☑ Other ☐ |

### ➡ What counts as a serving?
- 1 cup of raw vegetables
- 1 medium fruit
- 3/4 cup 100% vegetable juice
- 1/2 cup 100% fruit juice
- 1/2 cup cooked vegetables
- 1/4 cup of dried fruit
- 1 cup melon or berries

### ➡ How does juice count?
Juice can only be counted toward your "five a day" if it is 100 percent fruit juice. Also, because juice is a concentrated source of calories, only one of your five servings (or more) a day should come from juice.

**100% Juice**

## Week 1 / Dates: _____ / _____ / _____ to _____ / _____ / _____

| Day | Servings of Fruits or Vegetables ( ✔ = 1) | Daily Total (Aim for 5 or more a day) | Colors of Fruits or Vegetables | | | | | |
|-----|---------|-------|-------|---|-------|---|-------|---|
| Monday | ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ | | Green | ☐ | Yellow | ☐ | Red | ☐ |
| | | | Purple | ☐ | Orange | ☐ | Other | ☐ |
| Tuesday | ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ | | Green | ☐ | Yellow | ☐ | Red | ☐ |
| | | | Purple | ☐ | Orange | ☐ | Other | ☐ |
| Wednesday | ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ | | Green | ☐ | Yellow | ☐ | Red | ☐ |
| | | | Purple | ☐ | Orange | ☐ | Other | ☐ |
| Thursday | ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ | | Green | ☐ | Yellow | ☐ | Red | ☐ |
| | | | Purple | ☐ | Orange | ☐ | Other | ☐ |
| Friday | ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ | | Green | ☐ | Yellow | ☐ | Red | ☐ |
| | | | Purple | ☐ | Orange | ☐ | Other | ☐ |
| Saturday | ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ | | Green | ☐ | Yellow | ☐ | Red | ☐ |
| | | | Purple | ☐ | Orange | ☐ | Other | ☐ |
| Sunday | ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ | | Green | ☐ | Yellow | ☐ | Red | ☐ |
| | | | Purple | ☐ | Orange | ☐ | Other | ☐ |

## Week 2 / Dates: _____ / _____ / _____ to _____ / _____ / _____

| Day | Servings of Fruits or Vegetables ( ✔ = 1) | Daily Total (Aim for 5 or more a day) | Colors of Fruits or Vegetables | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Monday** | ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ | | Green ☐  Purple ☐ | Yellow ☐  Orange ☐ | Red ☐  Other ☐ |
| **Tuesday** | ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ | | Green ☐  Purple ☐ | Yellow ☐  Orange ☐ | Red ☐  Other ☐ |
| **Wednesday** | ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ | | Green ☐  Purple ☐ | Yellow ☐  Orange ☐ | Red ☐  Other ☐ |
| **Thursday** | ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ | | Green ☐  Purple ☐ | Yellow ☐  Orange ☐ | Red ☐  Other ☐ |
| **Friday** | ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ | | Green ☐  Purple ☐ | Yellow ☐  Orange ☐ | Red ☐  Other ☐ |
| **Saturday** | ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ | | Green ☐  Purple ☐ | Yellow ☐  Orange ☐ | Red ☐  Other ☐ |
| **Sunday** | ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ | | Green ☐  Purple ☐ | Yellow ☐  Orange ☐ | Red ☐  Other ☐ |

## Week 3 / Dates: ____ / ____ / ____ to ____ / ____ / ____

| Day | Servings of Fruits or Vegetables ( ✔ = 1) | Daily Total (Aim for 5 or more a day) | Colors of Fruits or Vegetables | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Monday | ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ | | Green ☐ | | Yellow ☐ | | Red ☐ | |
| | | | Purple ☐ | | Orange ☐ | | Other ☐ | |
| Tuesday | ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ | | Green ☐ | | Yellow ☐ | | Red ☐ | |
| | | | Purple ☐ | | Orange ☐ | | Other ☐ | |
| Wednesday | ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ | | Green ☐ | | Yellow ☐ | | Red ☐ | |
| | | | Purple ☐ | | Orange ☐ | | Other ☐ | |
| Thursday | ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ | | Green ☐ | | Yellow ☐ | | Red ☐ | |
| | | | Purple ☐ | | Orange ☐ | | Other ☐ | |
| Friday | ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ | | Green ☐ | | Yellow ☐ | | Red ☐ | |
| | | | Purple ☐ | | Orange ☐ | | Other ☐ | |
| Saturday | ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ | | Green ☐ | | Yellow ☐ | | Red ☐ | |
| | | | Purple ☐ | | Orange ☐ | | Other ☐ | |
| Sunday | ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ | | Green ☐ | | Yellow ☐ | | Red ☐ | |
| | | | Purple ☐ | | Orange ☐ | | Other ☐ | |

## Week 4 / Dates: ____ / ____ / ____  to ____ / ____ / ____

| Day | Servings of Fruits or Vegetables (✔ = 1) | Daily Total (Aim for 5 or more a day) | Colors of Fruits or Vegetables | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Monday | ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ | | Green ☐ | | Yellow ☐ | | Red ☐ | |
| | | | Purple ☐ | | Orange ☐ | | Other ☐ | |
| Tuesday | ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ | | Green ☐ | | Yellow ☐ | | Red ☐ | |
| | | | Purple ☐ | | Orange ☐ | | Other ☐ | |
| Wednesday | ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ | | Green ☐ | | Yellow ☐ | | Red ☐ | |
| | | | Purple ☐ | | Orange ☐ | | Other ☐ | |
| Thursday | ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ | | Green ☐ | | Yellow ☐ | | Red ☐ | |
| | | | Purple ☐ | | Orange ☐ | | Other ☐ | |
| Friday | ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ | | Green ☐ | | Yellow ☐ | | Red ☐ | |
| | | | Purple ☐ | | Orange ☐ | | Other ☐ | |
| Saturday | ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ | | Green ☐ | | Yellow ☐ | | Red ☐ | |
| | | | Purple ☐ | | Orange ☐ | | Other ☐ | |
| Sunday | ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ | | Green ☐ | | Yellow ☐ | | Red ☐ | |
| | | | Purple ☐ | | Orange ☐ | | Other ☐ | |

# Helpful tips from others



**"** As a former health teacher, I've always said, 'eat a rainbow everyday to get the variety of colors.' Baby carrots with a little dip or hummus make for an easy and nutritious snack. I make sure we have one or more vegetables for dinner and usually fruit during the day or as dessert — like an apple or whatever else is in season. **"**

— Char D.

**"** Tracking the amount of fruits and vegetables you eat every day, along with their color, reminds you to eat a variety of colorful foods to maximize the nutrients you eat. For example, if you tend to eat fruits and vegetables that are mostly white and yellow (e.g., potatoes, bananas, corn, onions), try adding some that are green, red or purple. You could add blueberries to your breakfast cereal, a red bell pepper to a salad for lunch, or try a kiwi for a snack. The more colors in the fruits and vegetables you eat, the greater the benefits to your heart health! **"**

— Rebecca W.

# Helpful tips from others

"I changed my eating habits after joining Weight Watchers (WW) last October. But I also did it to fit in with a community health-based initiative in our town. So far I have lost 45 pounds! The WW diet also recomends five servings of fruits and vegetables daily. I always start the day with a piece of fruit (usually a banana) and then also include a fruit with lunch and supper. If the fruit is really good, I have two servings at a time!

I think variety is very important, so I try to have many options available; if it's not easy to grab and go, I'll most likely make an unhealthy choice. I like to keep fruit or veggies cut up and ready to grab. Another thing we do is to fix vegetables on the grill — I lightly salt and cover with a small amount of olive oil. They take very little time to make and add a lot of flavor and color to your meal."

—Ellie S.
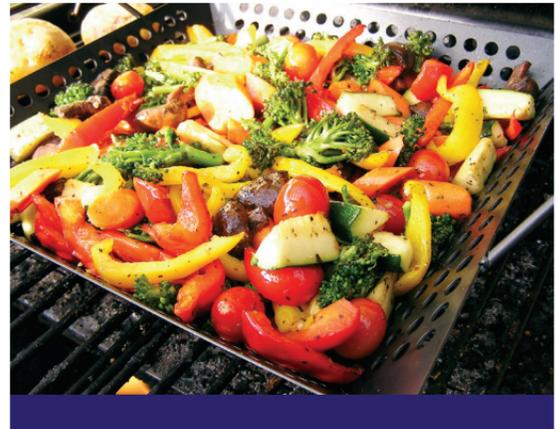
# Helpful tips from others



**"** I like to recommend that people consider joining a CSA (Community-Supported Agriculture) program, where they subscribe to get a box of fresh-from-the-farm fruits and vegetables every week for a season. When you get your box, you want to eat them — you want to challenge yourself to try and use them all up. It's also a great way to try new vegetables — like Swiss chard, kale and kohlrabi (a German turnip). In my own family, I've seen that my kids are more likely to eat vegetables from a CSA or farmer's market because they are so much fresher and flavorful. Once you start eating more vegetables, it seems you almost get 'addicted' to them!

As a busy mom with three kids, I also have a number of quick "go-to" ideas for eating more fruits and vegetables, including getting a basic cheese take-and-bake pizza and adding lots of vegetables such as onions, zucchini, peppers, spinach and kale. Veggie sandwiches are also great — you can use as many vegetables as you like and in pretty much any combination. One idea is to spread fat-free cream cheese (tub variety) on your bread, sprinkle with fresh or dried dill, then layer on thinly sliced vegetables such as radish, kohlrabi, cucumber, onion and bell pepper with a leafy vegetable such as leaf lettuce, Swiss chard or spinach and a piece of cheese if you want. My daughter doesn't even miss the meat! **"**

— Tracie V.

# Week 5 / Dates: ____ / ____ / ____ to ____ / ____ / ____

| Day | Servings of Fruits or Vegetables ( ✔ = 1) | Daily Total (Aim for 5 or more a day) | Colors of Fruits or Vegetables | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Monday | ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ | | Green ☐ | Purple ☐ | Yellow ☐ | Orange ☐ | Red ☐ | Other ☐ |
| Tuesday | ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ | | Green ☐ | Purple ☐ | Yellow ☐ | Orange ☐ | Red ☐ | Other ☐ |
| Wednesday | ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ | | Green ☐ | Purple ☐ | Yellow ☐ | Orange ☐ | Red ☐ | Other ☐ |
| Thursday | ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ | | Green ☐ | Purple ☐ | Yellow ☐ | Orange ☐ | Red ☐ | Other ☐ |
| Friday | ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ | | Green ☐ | Purple ☐ | Yellow ☐ | Orange ☐ | Red ☐ | Other ☐ |
| Saturday | ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ | | Green ☐ | Purple ☐ | Yellow ☐ | Orange ☐ | Red ☐ | Other ☐ |
| Sunday | ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ | | Green ☐ | Purple ☐ | Yellow ☐ | Orange ☐ | Red ☐ | Other ☐ |

## Week 6 / Dates: ____ / ____ / ____ to ____ / ____ / ____

| Day | Servings of Fruits or Vegetables ( ✔ = 1) | Daily Total (Aim for 5 or more a day) | Colors of Fruits or Vegetables | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Monday | ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ | | Green ☐ | Yellow ☐ | Red ☐ | Purple ☐ | Orange ☐ | Other ☐ |
| Tuesday | ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ | | Green ☐ | Yellow ☐ | Red ☐ | Purple ☐ | Orange ☐ | Other ☐ |
| Wednesday | ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ | | Green ☐ | Yellow ☐ | Red ☐ | Purple ☐ | Orange ☐ | Other ☐ |
| Thursday | ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ | | Green ☐ | Yellow ☐ | Red ☐ | Purple ☐ | Orange ☐ | Other ☐ |
| Friday | ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ | | Green ☐ | Yellow ☐ | Red ☐ | Purple ☐ | Orange ☐ | Other ☐ |
| Saturday | ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ | | Green ☐ | Yellow ☐ | Red ☐ | Purple ☐ | Orange ☐ | Other ☐ |
| Sunday | ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ | | Green ☐ | Yellow ☐ | Red ☐ | Purple ☐ | Orange ☐ | Other ☐ |

## Week 7 / Dates: ____ / ____ / ____ to ____ / ____ / ____

| Day | Servings of Fruits or Vegetables ( ✔ = 1) | Daily Total (Aim for 5 or more a day) | Colors of Fruits or Vegetables | | | | | |
|-----|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Monday | ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ | | Green ☐ | Yellow ☐ | Red ☐ | Purple ☐ | Orange ☐ | Other ☐ |
| Tuesday | ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ | | Green ☐ | Yellow ☐ | Red ☐ | Purple ☐ | Orange ☐ | Other ☐ |
| Wednesday | ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ | | Green ☐ | Yellow ☐ | Red ☐ | Purple ☐ | Orange ☐ | Other ☐ |
| Thursday | ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ | | Green ☐ | Yellow ☐ | Red ☐ | Purple ☐ | Orange ☐ | Other ☐ |
| Friday | ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ | | Green ☐ | Yellow ☐ | Red ☐ | Purple ☐ | Orange ☐ | Other ☐ |
| Saturday | ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ | | Green ☐ | Yellow ☐ | Red ☐ | Purple ☐ | Orange ☐ | Other ☐ |
| Sunday | ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ | | Green ☐ | Yellow ☐ | Red ☐ | Purple ☐ | Orange ☐ | Other ☐ |

## Week 8 / Dates: _____ / _____ / _____ to _____ / _____ / _____

| Day | Servings of Fruits or Vegetables ( ✔ = 1) | Daily Total (Aim for 5 or more a day) | Colors of Fruits or Vegetables | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Monday | ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ | | Green ☐ | | Yellow ☐ | | Red ☐ | |
| | | | Purple ☐ | | Orange ☐ | | Other ☐ | |
| Tuesday | ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ | | Green ☐ | | Yellow ☐ | | Red ☐ | |
| | | | Purple ☐ | | Orange ☐ | | Other ☐ | |
| Wednesday | ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ | | Green ☐ | | Yellow ☐ | | Red ☐ | |
| | | | Purple ☐ | | Orange ☐ | | Other ☐ | |
| Thursday | ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ | | Green ☐ | | Yellow ☐ | | Red ☐ | |
| | | | Purple ☐ | | Orange ☐ | | Other ☐ | |
| Friday | ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ | | Green ☐ | | Yellow ☐ | | Red ☐ | |
| | | | Purple ☐ | | Orange ☐ | | Other ☐ | |
| Saturday | ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ | | Green ☐ | | Yellow ☐ | | Red ☐ | |
| | | | Purple ☐ | | Orange ☐ | | Other ☐ | |
| Sunday | ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ | | Green ☐ | | Yellow ☐ | | Red ☐ | |
| | | | Purple ☐ | | Orange ☐ | | Other ☐ | |

*HOPE*

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