



Vary vegetables for vitamins

When it comes to vegetables, my husband eats only spinach — a whole carton of frozen spinach at dinner. Is that OK?

First, good for him for eating green vegetables on a daily basis. Spinach happens to be a very good source of dietary fiber, vitamin A, vitamin E, vitamin K, riboflavin, vitamin B6, folate, calcium, iron, magnesium, potassium, copper, manganese and selenium, and a good source of vitamin C, thiamin and phosphorus.

That sounds like a whole plateful of vitamins and minerals, but tell Popeye that if it's the only vegetable he eats, he's missing out on a lot.

Nutritionists shy away from recommending the consumption of a narrow band of any types of foods. Remember: "Everything in moderation" is the customary advice. Eating only spinach isn't "everything," and consuming a 10-ounce carton at a sitting isn't "moderation." So, don't be surprised if your local dietitian frowns when looking over your husband's standard menu.

Today, the general advice is to choose from a variety of colors of both fruits and vegetables. Different colors often represent different vitamins and phytochemicals offered by your favorite plant foods. For example:

- Many red fruits and vegetables, especially tomatoes, contain lycopene, which is thought to help fight prostate, colon, rectal and stomach cancers, and possibly even breast and cervical cancers.

- Yellow and orange fruits and vegetables are often good sources of beta carotene and carotenoids.

- Blue, purple and other brightly colored fruits and vegetables such as blueberries often contain flavonoids, such as the pigment anthocyanin, that are powerful antioxidants.

- Many green and yellow plant foods are good sources of lutein and zeaxanthin. These two phytochemicals reduce the risk of cataracts and macular degeneration, one of the leading causes of blindness. They are also thought to fight against liver and prostate cancers.

So, you're right to encourage your husband to vary his menu a bit. Introduce him to some Italian-style tomato sauce to top off his spinach and encourage him to snack on baby carrots with his lunch. He'll thank you for it one day. And if he doesn't, you'll have to ask for help from another advice column.

Chow Line is a service of Ohio State University Extension and the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center. Send questions to Chow Line, c/o Martha Filipic, 2021 Coffey Road, Columbus, OH 43210-1044, or filipic.3@osu.edu.



**For the week of
Sept. 26, 2004**

By Martha Filipic
(614) 292-9833
filipic.3@osu.edu

Editor:

This column was reviewed by Jaime Ackerman, registered dietitian and Ohio State University Extension associate in human nutrition in the College of Human Ecology.

To receive Chow Line electronically, send an e-mail to: osu-chow-on@ag.osu.edu
Read all of our news releases on the web at:
<http://ohioline.osu.edu/news/>
or on our new site,
<http://extension.osu.edu>

Section of Communications and Technology News & Media Relations

2021 Coffey Road
Columbus, Ohio 43210-1044
(614) 292-2011

208 Research Services
Building
Wooster, Ohio 44691-4096
(330) 263-3780

All educational programs and activities conducted by Ohio State University Extension are available to all potential clientele on a non-discriminatory basis without regard to race, color, creed, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, sex, age, handicap or Vietnam-era veteran status. TDD# 1 (800) 589-8292 (Ohio only) or (614) 292-1868