

What about all the white fruits and vegetables?

Researchers say consumers are ignoring them, and missing out on nutrients as a result

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Sometimes going to the produce aisle of a supermarket is like going to an art exhibit.

Whenever searching for your favorite vegetable or fruit, you'll usually see an array of reds next to greens and yellows next to purples in a wonderful and edible display of brightly colored produce.

For some, the mere appearance of fruits and vegetables will open up their eyes and appetites, not to mention their wallets -- so they'll fill their carts with all kinds of pretty-looking plums, carrots, tangerines and broccoli, on a weekly basis.

But it seems that many of us aren't putting white-colored produce into our carts and as a result we're missing out on tons of nutrients.

"Turns out, pale veggies can help make up nutrient shortfalls in our diets," said Phil Lempert, founder of [Food Nutrition & Science](#). "This provides another merchandising opportunity for produce managers at grocery stores who can help customers understand the importance of all the vegetable colors."

A recent report published in the June edition of *Food Nutrition & Science* stresses the importance of eating white produce, especially white potatoes.

Missing nutrients

And what are some of the other white vegetables that contain vital nutrients?

Onions, parsnips, cauliflower, turnips, rutabagas and mushrooms, experts say, and some good white fruits to eat are bananas, brown pears, white nectarines, white peaches and dates, just to name a few.

Dr. Connie Weaver, a nutrition science professor at [Purdue University](#) says white veggies; especially white potatoes contain nutrients that many of us are missing.

"It's recommended that the variety of fruits and vegetables consumed daily should include dark green and orange vegetables, but no such recommendation exists for white vegetables, even though they are rich in fiber, potassium, vitamin C and magnesium," said Weaver.

"Overall, Americans are not eating enough vegetables. Promoting white vegetables, some of which are common and affordable, may be a pathway to increasing vegetable consumption in general."

White fruits and vegetables have other kinds of nutrients too.

Experts say they have Secoisolariciresinol diglucoside (SDG) and Epigallocatechin gallate (ECG), which are both antioxidants. And they have beta-glucans and lignans, which can help strengthen the immune system.

Stroke prevention



Additionally, researchers from [Wageningen University](#) in the Netherlands said eating produce that's white on the inside could help with stroke prevention.

Researchers gathered 20,000 people ages 20 through 65, and for 10 years they monitored each participant's diet.

Unfortunately, 233 of the participants suffered a stroke during the course of the study and researchers learned every time a person raised their intake of white produce by 25 grams, he or she decreased their risk of having a stroke by 9%.

"The findings in this recent study serve to strengthen what is quickly becoming common knowledge to consumers, eating a variety of fruits and vegetables is good for overall health and reducing the risk of heart attacks, stroke, diabetes, some cancers and other chronic conditions, explained the President and CEO of [Produce for Better Health Foundation](#)," Elizabeth Pivonka.

"While this particular study focused on white fruits and vegetables, eating a colorful variety of fruits and vegetables provides a natural variety of vitamins, minerals, phytonutrients and fiber that allow you to be your best every day."

"Consumers are recognizing that making half their plate fruits and vegetables is easy when they include 100% juice, fresh, frozen, canned and dried fruits and vegetables," said Pivonka.

Linda M. Oude Griep, the chief study author of Wageningen University's research said getting more nutrients from white produce can be as simple as eating one apple.

Apple a day



"To prevent stroke, it may be useful to consume considerable amounts of white fruits and vegetables," she said. "For example, eating one apple a day is an easy way to increase white fruits and vegetable intake."

But consumers should be cautiously optimistic, said Dr. Heike Wersching, a researcher at the Institute of Epidemiology and Social Medicine at the [University of Münster](#) in Germany.

He told living [LivingScience.com](#) the study failed to recognize the other possible reasons that some of the participants didn't suffer a stroke.

"The observed reduction in stroke risk might further be due to a generally healthier lifestyle of individuals consuming a diet rich in fruits and vegetables," he said.

Wersching was not involved in the University of Münster study.