

Five Good Reasons for a Parent to Be Pro-Vaccines



As a parent, you buy the best car seats, baby gates and other safety items you can afford to keep your children safe. One of the best ways to protect your children is to get them vaccinated. Here are five reasons why.

1. Immunizations can save your child's life. Thanks to vaccines, diseases like measles, whooping cough and polio are no longer common. But they're still a threat. Vaccines wiped out smallpox, and there's hope we'll get there with other diseases.
2. Vaccinations are safe and effective. All vaccines undergo long and careful review by scientists, doctors, and the federal government to make sure they are safe.
3. Immunization protects people you care about. Unvaccinated kids can spread disease to family members, friends and grandparents. To help keep others safe, it's important that you and your children are fully immunized.

4. Immunizations can save your family time and money. A child with a vaccine-preventable disease may have to stay home from school or childcare if they are not vaccinated. You might have to miss work. Plus, these illnesses could lead to disabilities. That could mean more time off work, high medical bills and long-term care.
5. Immunization protects future generations. Your children don't have to get smallpox shots anymore because the disease no longer exists. That's because smallpox vaccination eradicated that disease worldwide.

Vaccinations help keep you and your loved ones safe from potentially deadly diseases including flu. Now is a good time to speak with your family's healthcare provider to make a plan for everyone's immunizations.

Resources: [CDC](#); [The History of Vaccines](#); [Immunization Action Coalition](#); [healthychildren.org](#); [Florida Health](#)

The Best Rainbow Is on Your Plate



Finding the pot of gold at the end of a rainbow can be as close as your plate. Making sure you eat a variety of colorful fruits and vegetables (F&V) is a big step toward good health.

F&Vs (and whole grains and legumes) provide energy and protect health. They help prevent and control chronic illnesses like diabetes, cancer, heart disease and obesity.

Their health benefits are color coded. For maximum impact, follow the rainbow – red, orange, yellow, green, blue and purple.

Red and pink foods have lycopene that boosts the immune system, and brain and heart health. Lycopene sources are strawberries, other red berries, tomatoes, cherries, apples, beets and watermelon. Plus, resveratrol is anti-inflammatory and good for the heart and lungs. You'll find resveratrol in red grapes and wine, and peanuts. If you choose red

wine, drink in moderation, which is no more than two glasses for men and one for women a day.

Orange and yellow F&Vs both contain beta carotene. This is essential for healthy eyes, skin, bones and the immune system. Look for veggies like carrots, sweet potatoes, yellow peppers, pumpkin and winter squash. For fruit, choose oranges, bananas, pineapple, tangerines, mango, peaches and cantaloupe.

Green F&Vs provide lutein, which builds eye and heart health. Be sure to eat spinach, avocados, asparagus, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage collard greens, kale, kiwi, limes, spinach and zucchini.

Blue and purple foods are also anti-inflammatory. They support blood vessel health, and your heart and brain. Look for blueberries, blackberries, concord grapes, raisins, eggplant, plums and purple cabbage.

Other F&V colors to add are white and brown, like onion, garlic, cauliflower, leeks and mushrooms.

You can eat different forms of these foods—fresh, frozen, canned or dried. (Watch out for added sugars in canned fruit.) Make the rainbow the focal point of each meal. Fill half your plate with F&Vs, and eat them for snacks and dessert.

Resources: [Mayo Clinic](#); [WebMD.com](#); [CDC](#); [American Cancer Society](#); [National Institutes of Health](#); [MyPlate](#); [Harvard Medical School](#); [Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#)

Vegan Watermelon Fruit Pizza

Ingredients:

- ½ cup unsweetened coconut-milk yogurt alternative
- 1 teaspoon pure maple syrup
- ¼ teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 large round slices watermelon (1 inch thick), cut from the center of the melon

- ⅔ cup sliced strawberries
- ½ cup halved blueberries or blackberries
- 2 tablespoons toasted unsweetened coconut flakes

Directions

Combine yogurt alternative, maple syrup and vanilla in a small bowl.

Spread ¼ cup of the yogurt mixture over each watermelon



round. Cut each round into 8 wedges. Top with strawberries, blueberries or blackberries. Sprinkle with coconut.

Recipe courtesy of [EatingWell.com](#). For nutritional information, [click here](#).

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