

PENNY SAVER NEWS

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Variety Includes White

"Put a rainbow on your plate" is good nutritional advice when it comes to the variety of fruits and vegetables we should be eating. But too many people have also heard, said or been told that we should be avoiding all white foods. That's not very good advice. Research has been finding more and more good nutrition in our white veggies too. So please do eat the whites.

But hold on - these whites are fruits and vegetables! This recommendation does not include a free pass for white pasta, white bread, or vanilla ice cream! The difference is that white vegetables do contain a lot of natural vitamins, minerals, antioxidants and often fiber. White bread, pasta and sugars are just plain starch or sugar, with no additional nutritional value.

On the other hand, there more good, healthy white vegetables than most people think of easily. When's the last time you had some parsnips, a turnip or a rutabaga? When did you choose white sweet corn over yellow? And how long has it been since you cooked up a cauliflower? All of these, plus onions and garlic, jicama, mushrooms and yes, potatoes are great veggies to keep in your variety list.

Potatoes are America's favorite vegetable, hands down. Most of us do not need encouragement to eat potatoes. But they've been getting put-down as being too starchy, all carbs, good for nothing but make us fat. The truth is a little different. For one thing, potatoes are a superb source of potassium, one of the minerals that helps control our blood pressure. They're also a decent source of vitamin C and B-6.

Don't believe the stories that all the fiber in a potato is in the skin, because it's not. There's still a lot of fiber in the white flesh. And here's a surprising fact about potato starch. If you cook potatoes then cool or refrigerate them, some of their starch is changed into a type of fiber too. This new fiber seems to be helpful in controlling blood sugar and managing weight. So potato salad is better than freshly boiled potatoes.

But besides potatoes there are lots of other great white veggies to choose from. Mushrooms

are very low in calories, high in protein and high in several of the B vitamins as well as several other minerals. If mushrooms are held under ultraviolet light they also produce vitamin D and can be good sources of that for us as well. There are also several compounds in mushrooms that help build up our immune systems. All that, and they're great both raw and cooked.

Onions and garlic are other white veggies that are so common we can almost forget about them. Don't let the aroma keep you away from them! They and others in their family such as shallots and leeks are good for helping to reduce inflammation, blood pressure and probably cholesterol. Onions at least have been tested for their ability to hold off cancer as well.

Cauliflower is another that comes from a good family. Along with cabbage, broccoli and Brussels sprouts, cauliflower is a good source of vitamin C. It's also a great source of fiber. And some of its phytonutrients help lower inflammation while building up our immune response. It too can be eating raw or cooked. It's almost as versatile as the potato, and mashed cauliflower is a good substitute for mashed potatoes if you do need to limit your carbs. Just please don't drown it in cheese sauce! There are so many other ways to eat it, all that greasy cheese really isn't necessary.

Here's a favorite cauliflower salad recipe. If you leave it sit in the refrigerator overnight to blend the flavors, the radishes (another white veggie!) will turn the dressing a beautiful pink.

Cauliflower-Caraway Salad

1 cup reduced fat mayonnaise	1 cup fat free sour cream
4 oz crumbled blue cheese	1 envelope powdered ranch dressing mix
2 tsp caraway seeds	1 head cauliflower, washed and chopped
1 cup sliced radishes	1 cup chopped green onions
1 4-oz can sliced water chestnuts	

Combine the mayo, sour cream, blue cheese, dressing powder and caraway seeds in small bowl. Cover and chill at least 1 hour. Combine the chopped cauliflower, radishes, onions and drained water chestnuts in large bowl. Add dressing and stir gently until coated. Chill for 1 hour or longer before serving. Serves 6.