

These foods are full of good things you won't find in vitamin pills.

You know produce has vitamins and minerals—but there's more. Scientists have found other compounds that may help keep you cancer-free.



An apple a day may stave off heart disease, say experts.

The healing power of fruits and vegetables

By Mindy Hermann, R.D.

When you think about whether you're eating a healthy diet, you probably ask yourself if you're getting sufficient vitamins and minerals. Although that's a valid question, you should also be concerned about whether you are getting enough phytochemicals (pronounced Fi'-toe-chemicals). These substances in foods are the hottest news in nutrition—with good reason. Many of them may help prevent can-

cer and other serious ailments, says John Potter, M.D., head of the Cancer Prevention Research Program at the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center in Seattle. In fact, phytochemicals boast a list of health benefits that's as long as their name.

It's easy to work these new disease fighters into your diet, because you don't have to focus on eating a few nutritional superstars like broccoli and cauliflower. Phytochemicals are present in all fruits and vegetables and in many

other common plant foods (*phyto* comes from the Greek word for "plant").

You can get these healthful substances from whole grains, beans, peas and many herbs and spices. In fact, you may decrease your cancer risk every time you throw onion and garlic into your pasta sauce or sprinkle rosemary on your chicken.

Food's hidden benefit

What exactly are phytochemicals? They're compounds that give plant foods their odor, color and flavor and also contribute

Is juice just as healthy as the whole food?



Probably not.

While juice is nutritious, the whole food is even better. The reason: Juicing removes the food's pulp. When you throw out the pulp, you lose fiber and many of the phytochemicals.

to plants' self-defense systems. Each of these potent chemicals has a different name, such as coumarins, found in tomatoes.

When scientists started analyzing these com- ▶

7 top phytochemicals: Where to find them, what they can do for you



Garlic

Contains: Allium compounds, also found in onions and chives.

Benefit: May lower cholesterol; may block the formation of cancer-causing chemicals.



Hot peppers

Contains: Capsaicin.

Benefit: May short-circuit the development of various types of cancer; helps to prevent toxic substances from attaching to the DNA within the body's cells.



Carrots

Contains: Carotenoids, also found in sweet potatoes, kale, cantaloups, parsley, spinach, cauliflower.

Benefit: May stave off lung cancer by shielding the cells from toxins.



Tomatoes

Contains: Coumarins, also found in citrus fruits.

Benefit: May stop the body from forming substances that can give rise to cancer; may prevent blood clots.



Kale

Contains: Indoles, also found in brussels sprouts, cabbage and broccoli.

Benefit: May protect against a variety of cancers by making dangerous toxins easier to excrete.



Oranges

Contains: Limonoids, also found in other citrus fruits.

Benefit: May stimulate the production of natural substances that break down many cancer-causing chemicals.



Raspberries

Contains: Phenols, also found in grapes, strawberries and blueberries.

Benefit: May reduce the risk of cancer by trapping toxic chemicals and flushing them out of the body.