

## WINTER NUTRITION & HEALTH

Changes in seasons can affect us physically and socially. In Southern California fall and winter brings with them mild temperatures that encourage us to spend more time outdoors being active. During these months we also have an array of fruits and vegetables that can boost our energy and protect us from flu and colds.



## ORANGES

One orange has more than 100% of the daily of vitamin C, important for strengthening immune

system, helps absorb iron, protects cells from damage and helps build collagen.

Oranges are also a great source for potassium, a mineral that can help lower blood pressure and maintain bone health.



## PHYTOCHEMICALS

Southern California agriculture is one of the main sources for winter produce. Cauliflower, kale, almonds, walnuts, oranges, grapefruits, lemons, spinach, celery and squash provide a colorful and diverse nutrition boost for the winter.

The different colors of winter produce are not only beautiful, they contain health boosting substances called PHYTOCHEMICALS.

Even though phytochemicals are not nutrients, they are plant components that have been associated with a decrease in risk of some cancers and diseases.

## CAROTENOIDS

Carotenoids are compounds that belong to the Vitamin A family.

They are responsible for the yellow, red and orange pigments in many winter vegetables. The most common Carotenoid is Beta-carotene, which can be converted into **Vitamin A** by our bodies. Vitamin A is critical for healthy vision and maintenance of immune system barriers such as skin and lungs. When consumed through foods, rather than supplements, it can help lower risk of some cancers. Good sources for Beta Carotene are carrots, sweet potatoes, pumpkin and squash.

Carotenoids are best absorbed by the body when taken with a form of fat. A low-fat diet can decrease the absorption of carotenoids, so don't hesitate to add a little cream to your butternut squash soup or use olive oil in your winter salad dressing.