The Rules of Traffic Light Eating:
Color Code Your Way to Healthier Eating Today

A Makeover Your Kitchen and Transform Your Life
eCourse and eCookbook by the Healthy Food Fashionista
A Note from Becky

About five years ago when I embarked on our family’s diet change journey, the first thing I did was look for resources to help me along my way. While I found copious amounts of information in the form of books and websites telling me what I needed to be feeding my family and what foods we should be avoiding (not to mention a lot of terrifying information about our food sources), what I found to be missing was simple, practical, real-life tips to help me get my family from “Yuk” to “Yum”. Because, truth be told, even with the most well intentioned and firm decision to make a change, healthy, whole food does not instantly taste good to us when we have been addicted for years to highly processed foods full of refined sugars and grains. I was floundering a bit and getting quite a bit of food revolt from my family when I met my friend Ute. Ute introduced me to Dr. William Sears and the Rules of Traffic Light Eating. Suddenly I had a diet change road map that my entire family could understand and start to follow.

Years later, after successfully implementing a 180 degree nutritional turnaround for my family, becoming a certified L.E.A.N. (Lifestyle, Exercise, Attitude and Nutrition) Wellness Coach, and starting my Healthy Food Fashionista website and business, I still believe that implementing the Rules of Traffic Light Eating is the most important first step you can take toward making lifelong improvements to your family’s daily food choices. That’s why I developed this FREE mini-eCourse and eCookbook. I want these simple, but amazingly effective Rules of Traffic Light eating to be available to everyone. Don’t worry. When I say simple, I REALLY mean simple. When I was a nutrition educator for a Head Start preschool in St. Louis, I successfully taught traffic light eating to preschool students, teachers, staff and parents. If a three year old can “get it” so can you!

Let’s get started!

Color Code Your Kitchen with the Rules of the Diet Change Road

What exactly IS traffic light eating? I assure you—you will not be actually eating a traffic light—unless it’s made of apples.

The concept of traffic light eating is based on very familiar, iconic symbols known around the world—the three colors of a traffic light. There is the **GREEN** light—telling us it’s safe to go. There is the **YELLOW** light—warning us to slow down and be prepared to stop. And finally, there is the **RED** light—alerting us to stop and wait until the light turns green again. Because the meaning of the three traffic light colors transcends age, language and many cultural barriers, the concept provides an ideal road map for teaching a method of healthy eating to people of all ages and backgrounds.
Here’s the gist of it...

GREEN light foods are “Go” or “Grow” foods that you can and should eat anytime and every day. They include fruits and veggies that are nutrient dense – packed with nutrients but low in calories.

YELLOW light foods can be eaten every day, but not too much. The yellow light reminds us to slow down when we eat these foods because they are higher in calories and slightly more processed than Green light foods.

RED light foods, on the other hand, are foods that should be avoided or eaten rarely and only in small amounts. These include most fried foods, fast foods and highly processed packaged food. The Red light reminds us to stop and consider making a healthier food choice.

Here’s a little more information about each food “color”...

Green Light Foods

Green light foods are foods that do not require a food label. They are GROWN on plants NOT manufactured in a factory. Green light foods include all fruits and veggies. Green light foods can usually be eaten raw; they are naturally colorful, low in fat and nutrient dense. Nutrient dense means the food packs a big punch because it is loaded with vitamins, minerals, fiber and phytonutrients while at the same time having very few calories per serving. Green light foods are real, whole foods. They vary greatly in color, size and taste. There are so many options I can’t possibly list them all.

Let’s just take a walk through the alphabet, shall we? Apples, bananas, clementines, dandelion greens, eggplant, fennel, garlic, haricots verts, iceberg lettuce, jicama, kale, lemons, melons, nuts, oranges... you get the idea. You certainly can’t say you there is a shortage of choices now can you?
Yellow Light Foods

The yellow traffic light warns us to slow down and be prepared to stop. That’s exactly what Yellow light foods do. You can and should eat Yellow light foods every day-- but just go slow. Because Yellow light foods are higher in calorie than Green light foods, you don’t want to eat too much.

Yellow light foods are grown, farmed or raised, but require additional processing before we can eat them. Raw wheat from the fields is not very tasty or easy to digest. Meat and eggs generally need to be cooked. A Green light food, like an apple, can become a Yellow light food when it undergoes minimal processing. For example, changing an apple into apple sauce changes the apple from a Green light to a Yellow light food. Make sense?

Yellow light foods include whole grain pastas, breads, rice and noodles as well as beans, lean meat, poultry, fish, eggs, milk, cheese, yogurt and other dairy products. Yellow light foods should be eaten every day because they provide different vitamins, minerals and other nutrients than Green light foods.

As I mentioned, Yellow light foods are higher in calories than Green light foods. That’s a good thing because Yellow light foods help us feel full and satisfied. But that also means portion control is a must.
**Red Light Foods**

Red light foods are highly processed and prepackaged. They are generally high in fat and sugar and frequently contain artificial sweeteners, high fructose corn syrup, trans fat and food additives. Red light foods are CALORIE dense—meaning they are high in calories but low in nutritional value.

Green and Yellow light foods can easily become Red light foods when they are processed in certain ways. For example, remember the Green light apple that became the Yellow light apple sauce? Well that same apple can easily change into a Red light food when it’s served as Hot Apple Pie at a fast food restaurant because it has now been cooked with extra sugar or syrup and is surrounded by a crust that likely contains trans fat.

Another fast food transformation to watch out for is Green light potatoes that become Red light French fries. Is it starting to make sense to you? The farther a food gets from its original source—being plant or animal—the more likely it is to become a Red light food.

Other Red light foods include fatty and highly processed lunch meats, refined white grain products like breads, bagels, buns, crackers, rice and pastas. Fried potato chips and store bought cookies, muffins, donuts, pastries and any prepackaged foods with high fructose corn syrup, hydrogenated oils and food additives are ALL Red light foods.

That’s traffic light eating in a nutshell folks. Pretty simple, huh?

Now, let’s take a look at how you can color code your grocery list so that you can prepare and serve a full day’s worth of kid-friendly meals and snacks that are packed with Green and Yellow light foods.
Here are the items you will need to prepare the Green and Yellow Menu of the Day:

**Pantry staples:**
- Honey (raw, unheated is best)
- 100% Fruit spread or preserves
- All natural almond or peanut butter (content should be nuts only)
- Jar of marinara sauce (high quality, minimal ingredients without chemical additives or corn syrup)
- Crushed or slivered nuts
- Ground flax seed

**Breads:**
- Whole wheat tortillas
- Whole wheat pita bread

**Dairy:**
- Large container of Greek strained, plain yogurt
- 4 oz goat cheese
- Assorted favorite cheeses for pizza like parmesan, mozzarella, feta and goat.

**Fruit:**
- Apples
- Bananas
- Fresh or frozen berries
- Other fresh fruit of your choice for dinner side dish

**Veggies:**
- Assorted favorite snack veggies like carrots, celery, bell pepper, grape tomatoes. Use these as snacks and as side dish for dinner.
- Veggies for pizza toppings like olives, tomatoes, basil, bell peppers and mushrooms.
The Green and Yellow Menu of the Day

Breakfast: Build Your Own Yogurt Parfait Bar

Yogurt parfaits are a breakfast staple in our house. It’s a great diet transition meal because it is a healthier version of a kid-favorite Red Light food—pre-sweetened yogurt cups or tubes with too much sugar (usually in the form of high fructose corn syrup) or artificial sweeteners and other food additives. It also satisfies three of my weekday breakfast requirements: super fast, super tasty and super healthy. But, the best part about this recipe is that you can set everything out and yell “come make your breakfast”. Even very young kids can prepare their own parfait. So, now you are free to run about the house like a chicken with your head cut off making lunches, finding shoes, brushing hair, finding lost books and all the other things you have to do in the morning.

Ingredients:

1 large container of Greek strained plain yogurt.
Honey (raw, unheated is best)
Fresh or frozen berries of your choice
Ground or slivered nuts (like almonds) and/or ground flaxseed

Method:

Have each of your family members scoop several large spoonfuls of yogurt into a bowl or parfait glass (my kids will try anything served out of a fancy glass—go figure). Stir in 1-2 teaspoons (to taste) of honey until smooth. Add fruit and other toppings of your choice. Sit down and eat.

HFF Tips:

- You may need to add more honey at first-- while your taste buds adapt to the whole food version of this meal.
- Greek strained yogurt is best for a couple of reasons. First, it is thicker than regular yogurt so it will not get overly runny when you stir in the honey. Second, it has about double the amount of protein per serving than regular yogurt—which is a really good thing. Protein helps fill kids up and keep their blood sugar stable. Our family favorite brand is FAGE.
- Dash O’Flax ground flaxseed comes in a little shaker top bottle. It tastes slightly sweet and adds just a little crunch to the yogurt if you want crunch but don’t like nuts.
Lunch: PB&B Wrap

A little twist on a classic.

Ingredients:
- Whole wheat tortillas
- Peanut or almond butter
- Sliced bananas
- Drizzle of honey

Method:
Spread peanut or almond butter on the tortilla. Place thin banana slices on top. Drizzle honey over bananas. Roll up the tortilla and cut it in half for easier handling and packing.

Variations:
You can skip the banana and add strawberry slices instead. Or, if you, like my husband, hold firm to the belief that fruit does not belong on a sandwich, use a little extra honey or 100% fruit spread.

HFF Tips:
- If the whole wheat tortilla is going to be a tough sell at first, buy the highest quality white flour tortilla you can find—meaning no hydrogenated oils and chemical additives. Work your way up to the whole wheat.
- Read the label on your butter spread. Peanut butter or almond butter should be just that ---ground nuts. No added oil or sugar or anything else. Otherwise, this healthy Yellow light food quickly becomes a RED light food to be avoided.

Snack: Sliced Apples with Goat Cheese and Honey Spread

Ingredients:
- Your favorite apples—one for everyone—cored and sliced
- 4 oz goat cheese, brought to room temperature
- 3 T fig or other 100% fruit preserves
- 2-3 T honey

Method:
Place Goat cheese, fruit preserves (we love fig) and honey in a small mixing bowl and mix together with a hand mixer until combined and smooth. Serve with sliced apples.

HFF Tip:
- Not a fig fan? That’s okay. You can substitute any of your favorite all fruit spreads or preserves in this recipe to make any flavor spread you desire. It’s a great, healthy, all natural alternative to flavored cream cheese.
- This spread is so yummy it makes everything taste better. So mix it up and serve it with any type of fruit or veggies or try it as a spread on whole grain crackers, bread or bagels.
Dinner: Pita Pizzas

This is another staple in the Bishop Family dinner rotation because it too passes the super fast, super healthy, super tasty test! And, it is also a good diet transition meal because it’s a healthier version of an old favorite.

Ingredients:
Whole wheat pita bread (at least 1 per family member)
Homemade or high quality store bought marinara sauce *
Assortment of grated or crumbled cheeses. Parmesan, mozzarella, feta and goat cheese are some of our favorites.
Assorted toppings like sliced fresh mushrooms, diced tomatoes, fresh basil, chopped chicken, ground beef, pepper rings, olive slices, etc.

Method:
Preheat oven to 450 degrees. Place pita bread on baking sheet. Spread several spoonfuls of marinara sauce over the bread. Top with cheese and other desired toppings. Bake for 12-15 minutes or until cheese is melted and bread becomes just a bit crispy around the edges. Remove from oven. Cool slightly and cut into wedges. Serve with a raw cut veggies and fruit.

HFF Tips:
• When buying store bought marinara, please read the label and make sure you are getting all food rather than a bunch of chemicals and watch out for added sugar or corn syrup. Amy’s brand is one of our favorites.
• This is another recipe where everyone can help by making their own pizza.
• When choosing toppings, make sure you have a little something for every family member. That allows you to prepare a single meal that everyone will like.

Traffic Light Eating Wrap-Up

There you have it—a complete, family-friendly menu of Green and Yellow light foods. For more recipes that follow the rules of traffic light eating, please visit my website and, if you haven’t already, sign up for my FREE weekly emails so that you will receive T.H.E. (Tasty, Healthy, Easy) Recipe of the Week delivered right to your inbox.

If you like this mini-course and eCookbook, please forward it to a friend and help me spread the good news: healthy eating fits any style. If you are hungry for more healthy eating tips, recipes and grocery lists, please check out some of my other products and service offerings below. You can also visit my website at www.HealthyFoodFashionista.com or follow me on Facebook, www.facebook.com/HealthyFoodFashionista or Twitter, www.twitter.com/MightyMorsels.
More from the Healthy Food Fashionista's eBook Series: Makeover Your Kitchen and Transform Your Life

- Is your SAD (Standard American Diet) Diet weighing you down?
- Does most of your family’s food come from a box rather than a plant?
- Do you find yourself wanting to eat healthier but you just don’t know where to start?

If you answered “Yes” to any of these questions—you’ve come to the right place. The Healthy Food Fashionista’s Makeover Your Kitchen and Transform Your Life eBook series will show you how healthy eating fits every style—including your life style. Each eBook gives you simple, realistic diet change strategies and solutions—including family-friendly recipes and grocery lists—to help you make life-improving diet changes in LESS THAN ONE WEEK.


This FREE eBook will teach you the rules of traffic light eating—a simple method of identifying foods as either green, yellow or red light foods—so even the youngest member of your family can start making better food choices TODAY. This FREE eBook includes a grocery list and meal plan with 4 family-friendly recipes to show you how easy—and TASTY—it is to implement and follow the rules of traffic light eating.

T.H.E. Breakfast Beacon.

This eBook is dedicated to the most important meal of the day—Breakfast. Not only will you learn why breakfast is so important, you will receive a week’s worth of T.H.E. (Tasty, Healthy and Easy) recipes to help you start your day off right. Also included is my Breakfast Buds grocery list—designed to pack your pantry with everything you need to make breakfasts so healthy and quick you can practically do it in your sleep.

The HFF goes HFF: Healthy, Fast and Frugal.

Find your inner HFF—Healthy, Fast and Frugalista. This eBook will give you money and time saving tips so you never again utter the words, “I don’t have enough time or money to eat healthy.” This eBook teaches you how to prepare a whole chicken and then gives you 7 simple, inexpensive, kid-approved meal choices that you can make from that chicken. You’ll also receive the grocery list you need to prepare all 7 meals. This book is a must for busy parents!
Getting From Yuk to Yum.

This eBook tackles the “my kids won’t eat that” problem head on. From experience, I know it takes time to shape taste buds so that people actually enjoy the taste of real, whole foods like fruits, veggies and whole grains. This eBook arms you with tried and true strategies to get your family (and you) to take that all important first bite. The recipes in the eBook include dips, sauces, spreads and smoothies that will help you get those whole foods to go down with a smile. Of course, you’ll get the grocery list you need to make them all.

The Whole Food Challenge.

Your mission, should you choose to accept it: add one new whole food to your diet each week. Your guide: the Whole Food Challenge eBook. This eBook features 52 real whole foods, tells you why they are good for you and gives you ideas on how to add them to your diet. You also get 52 recipes highlighting each of those featured foods. It doesn’t get easier than this folks. When you complete this challenge, you will have added 52 real, whole foods to your diet in just one year!

Can’t find what you’re looking for?

Never fear, new eBooks are in the works including: Complex Carbs are Cool, The Skinny on Fat, The Power of Protein, The Fiber Fix, The Truth About Sugar, Lunch Box Bites, and Eating Healthy On the Go. Still don’t see what you’re after? Please, send me your suggestions at support@healthyfoodfashionista.com.

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Becky Bishop, the Healthy Food Fashionista, is a healthy eating specialist and lifestyle coach. She is the founder of www.HealthyFoodFashionista.com, a website devoted to helping people makeover their kitchen and transform their lives.

Becky is also a certified L.E.A.N. (Lifestyle, Exercise, Attitude, Nutrition) Coach. The L.E.A.N. certification is offered exclusively by Dr. William Sears, M.D., the renowned pediatrician and nutrition expert. As a certified L.E.A.N. Coach, Becky is dedicated to helping people of all ages make healthier life-long choices by teaching Dr. Sears’ scientifically proven, clinically based L.E.A.N. Programs to adults, children, parents, caregivers, educators and corporations in private and group settings.

Becky is also a member of the L.E.A.N advisory council and served as the nutrition educator for a Head Start preschool in St. Louis. She publishes a monthly eZine, Mighty Morsels and is the author of numerous e-courses and e-cookbooks. Becky has been featured on the Great Day St. Louis television show as well as the web-radio show, Conscious Manifesting. Becky’s healthy eating column, Mighty Morsels, is featured in the holistic magazine, The Rising.

In addition to her passion for teaching others about the powerful benefits of a whole food based diet, Becky is a wife and a mother to 12 year old twins. She received her Bachelor of Arts in Economics and her Juris Doctorate from the University of Kansas. She practiced law for over 15 years and is a certified mediator.

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