



Antioxidants are powerful substances that **protect** cells in the body from damage. These disease-preventing health boosters are produced in the body and are found **naturally** in foods. Plant foods, including fruits, vegetables and whole grains, are especially rich in antioxidants. What is the role of antioxidants in supporting **health** and a healthy eating pattern? Are you getting enough?

Antioxidant Basics

Antioxidants ward off disease and have been associated with a reduced risk of heart disease, diabetes and cancer as well as slowing the **aging** process. Vitamins C & E and the mineral selenium act as key antioxidants in the body or can boost antioxidant activity.

- Vitamin C is the best-known antioxidant and offers a wide variety of health benefits. It protects the body from infection, cell **damage** and helps with iron and folate absorption.
- Vitamin E may delay the progression of Alzheimer’s. Supplements may increase the risk of prostate cancer and bleeding.
- Phytonutrients may **reduce** inflammation, the risk of cancer, heart disease, stroke, and Parkinson’s disease.
- Selenium is a **mineral** that may decrease inflammation and regulate the thyroid.

No single antioxidant or food can do it all. Each antioxidant behaves differently in the body. A healthy eating pattern that includes a variety of fresh whole colorful foods is the best way to achieve **optimal** levels of antioxidants. This also supports healthy aging.

Although supplements of these nutrients have not been shown to be as effective and/or they may interact with medication or be **harmful**, IF you choose to supplement, check with your health care provider to ensure it is safe to do so.



Boost Antioxidants to Protect Cells



- To maintain optimal levels of antioxidants, eat small frequent meals.
- Focus on fresh whole foods or minimally processed foods.
- Include plenty of dark green leafy vegetables and a **variety** of colorful fresh produce. Focus on citrus, strawberries, bell peppers, carrots, sweet potatoes, tomatoes and broccoli. The more colors you eat, the more phytonutrients you get!
- Use herbs and spices to **enhance** flavor and promote healthy aging. Ginger, rosemary and turmeric are packed with antioxidants.
- Black and green teas, along with coffee, are rich in antioxidants. Just be mindful of what you put in them.
- Nuts and seeds are **rich** in selenium and vitamin E. Add these to salads or yogurt.

Minimize Foods That Damage Cells

Step away from processed and highly refined foods as they are associated with the formation of free radicals that damage cells. These include refined carbohydrates, added sugars and processed meats such as hot dogs, sausage, luncheon meats and bacon.

Fried foods, red meat and alcohol can also damage cells, which work against healthy aging.

WORD SEARCH Find the **bold italic** words

C	S	Z	O	X	S	T	A	H	R
E	N	H	A	N	C	E	G	A	I
V	A	R	I	E	T	Y	I	R	C
Q	H	J	T	H	D	O	N	M	H
Z	G	O	W	A	E	H	G	F	N
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