



Nutrition Facts

The Power of Antioxidants

Eat a Variety of Fruits and Vegetables Every Day!



1. What are ANTIOXIDANTS?

Antioxidants protect the body against the damaging effects of “free radicals.” The damage caused by free radicals may contribute to the onset of cancer, heart disease, and other age-related diseases.

2. Which NUTRIENTS are considered antioxidants?

Certain vitamins and minerals and many types of phytochemicals can act as antioxidants. Vitamin C is the most abundant water-soluble antioxidant in the body, while vitamin E is the most abundant fat-soluble antioxidant in the body. The minerals selenium, manganese, copper, and zinc may also have antioxidant effects. Phytochemicals are naturally occurring antioxidants found in all kinds of plant foods.



3. Which FOODS contain high levels of antioxidants?

Fruits and vegetables contain thousands of antioxidant compounds. Variety is essential—different colors of plant foods contain a variety of antioxidants, and the more brightly colored, the richer in antioxidants. Whole grains, nuts, and legumes such as beans, garbanzos, and lentils are other good sources of antioxidants.

4. Can antioxidants protect against DISEASE?

Research suggests that eating enough servings of antioxidant-containing foods can lower the risk of many diseases, including heart disease, stroke, cancer, osteoporosis, cataracts, and urinary tract infections. It can also slow down the aging process (loss of vision, wrinkles, and short term memory loss).

5. The lesson: Eat your FRUITS and VEGETABLES!

There may be other unidentified substances in plant foods that contribute to a beneficial effect. The best way to ensure adequate intake of antioxidant nutrients is through a balanced diet containing 2 cups of fruits and 2 ½ cups of vegetables daily.



Ask the Dietitian
County of Los Angeles, Public Health
Nutrition Program

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