



The Power of Antioxidants

5 Things You Should Know About Antioxidants

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The word "**antioxidant**" is one you might hear a lot, maybe from commercials on TV or posters in the supermarket.

But it can be hard to know the difference between marketing and the real benefits.

To get to the bottom of this topic, let's deep dive into **five exciting facts about antioxidants** and why they are so powerful and essential.

Fact #1: Antioxidants are substances



First of all, you need to know that all antioxidants are substances. Some are man-made, and some are naturally occurring in your body.

It is not sure how many substances can act as antioxidants, but there could be thousands. And each has its role and can interact with others to help your body work at its best.

Antioxidants can be found, for example, in vitamins and minerals like *Vitamin A*, *Vitamin C*, *Vitamins E*, *Selenium*, and *Beta-carotene*.

Fact #2: Fights free radicals



Free radicals get produced in your body during natural processes like digestion and breathing. But they can also come from, for example, tobacco smoke, UV rays, and additives.

Free radicals are unstable oxygen molecules that seek out and pair up with healthy cells to make themselves whole again. This process will weaken and damage the healthy cells and their DNA, and oxidation can upset the cells leading to health problems in your body.

Suppose you have too many free radicals in your body. In that case, this causes oxidative stress and can contribute to an increased risk of developing chronic diseases.

Luckily for us, antioxidants can help prevent damage from too many free radicals floating around. Antioxidants move around in your body to help stabilise the cells to stay in their healthy and happy state.

Many people agree that the main benefit of antioxidants in fighting free radicals is to keep the body healthy and free of various diseases.

Fact #3: Most foods are antioxidants



Almost all food contains some antioxidant, but the amount varies a lot. Therefore, it is essential to include various food in your daily diet.

You can find antioxidants in both animal-based foods and plant-based foods.

The amount is remarkably higher in plant-based foods like fruits, vegetables, whole grains, beans, and nuts. But eggs and dairy products will also help you get a sufficient amount.

Even coffee and tea will help provide you with many antioxidants.

You can get your daily boost of antioxidants from these foods:

Vitamin A	Green leafy vegetables, yellow and orange vegetables, mango, fish oils, liver, milk, and eggs.
Vitamin C	Broccoli, brussels sprouts, sweet potatoes, bell peppers, tomatoes, and citrus fruits
Vitamin E	Nuts, seeds, oils, spinach, avocado, asparagus, mango, fish, and kiwi
Selenium	Milk, yoghurt, cottage cheese, poultry, fish, Brazil nuts, beans, and banana
Beta-Carotene	Carrots, spinach, lettuce, squash, sweet potatoes, peas, apricots, herbs, and spices.

While it favours obtaining your antioxidants from foods, you can also get them from supplements.

Fact #4: Get them from supplements



If you have a deficiency of antioxidants, you can obtain them through **supplements**.

While the intake of antioxidants is essential for optimal health, you have to be careful not to overdo it. You have to be aware that excessive intake of antioxidant supplements can have toxic effects. So it's recommended to avoid **high doses** of antioxidant supplements.

Some studies show that taking antioxidant supplements in **large doses** may decrease exercise performance. Other studies show that antioxidant supplements have no positive effect in preventing disease, except for Vitamin C, which, in large amounts, can *relieve* the common cold.

Eating plenty of antioxidant-rich whole foods like fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and nuts is always preferable. It is proven to reduce oxidative damage to a greater extent than supplements.

Fact #5: Lower risk of disease



Suppose you have too many free radicals in your body. In that case, you will have a higher risk of diseases like atherosclerosis, Alzheimer's disease, cancer, ocular disease, diabetes, and rheumatoid arthritis.

When eating antioxidant-rich food, you may prevent or delay the course of these diseases.

Let's look at cancer as an example. Here the underlying cause of the disease is thought to be damage to DNA (one reason for this could be too many free radicals).

The process by which normal cells get transferred into cancer cells is not fully understood. But it is plausible that antioxidants may interfere with this process. So, certain antioxidants such as vitamin E, vitamin C, and beta-carotene may be responsible for lower cancer rates.



Bottom Line

Antioxidants help you fight free radicals, leading to improved health and well-being. They help your body stay healthy and lower the risk of various diseases.

If you need supplements, it's recommended not to take larger doses.

Providing your body with food rich in antioxidants like fruit, vegetables, and nuts is favoured over supplements.



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