

Antioxidants

What Do Antioxidants Do?

Antioxidants are nutrients in food that protect your cells from damage from free radicals.

- Free radicals are unstable molecules that can damage your cells. Your body creates them when you digest food or breathe in pollution.
- This cell damage may increase your risk of cancer, heart disease, cataracts, diabetes, or infections. Free radicals may also affect brain function.

Tips for Getting More Antioxidants

- Eat a rainbow of fruits and vegetables. The colors of fruits and vegetables are clues about the types of nutrients they provide. To get a variety of nutrients, eat a variety of colors.
- Be adventurous in the produce section:
 - Choose a colorful fruit or vegetable you have never tried before.
 - Encourage your family to pick a new fruit or vegetable each time you shop.
- Plan at least two dinners per week with beans as the main source of protein. Good choices are rice and beans or hearty bean soups.
- Experiment with fresh herbs and spices.
- Choose whole grain products, such as whole wheat bread and brown rice.
- Add nuts to salads, soups, and cereal.
- Snack on fresh vegetables with bean dip.
- Eat salsa as a snack, with your scrambled eggs, on a baked potato, or with vegetables.

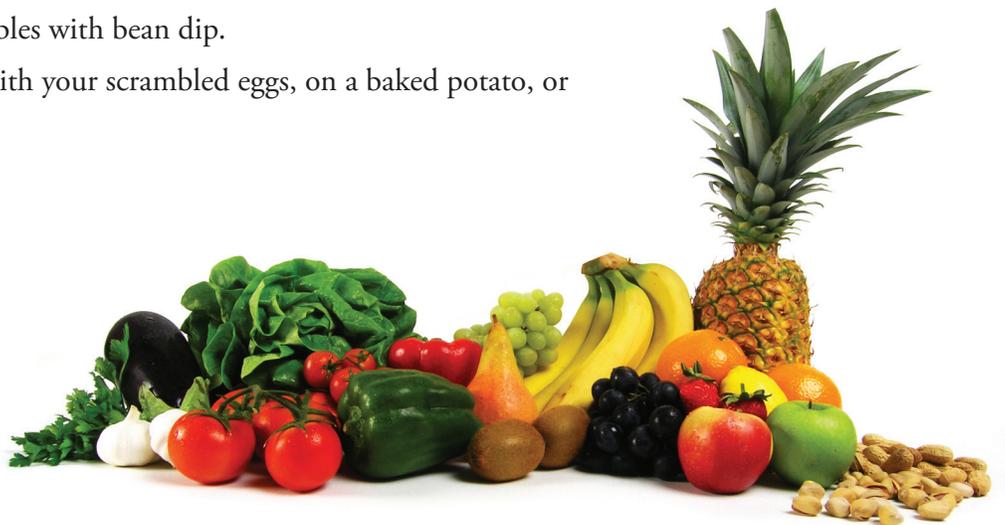
Types of Antioxidants

Many nutrients are antioxidants.

Examples include:

- Vitamin A
- Vitamin C
- Vitamin E
- Anthocyanins
- Beta carotene
- Catechins
- Ellagic acid
- Lutein
- Lycopene
- Resveratrol
- Selenium

Foods probably contain other antioxidants that are still undiscovered. Eating a wide variety of foods will help you get the full benefit of these antioxidants.



Which Foods Have Antioxidants?

Food	Antioxidant Nutrients
Acorn squash, pumpkin, winter squash	Beta carotene
Apples	Catechins
Apricots, cantaloupe, peaches	Beta carotene
Beans	Catechins, vitamin E
Beets	Anthocyanins
Bell peppers	Beta carotene, vitamin C
Berries	Anthocyanins, catechins, ellagic acid (in raspberries and strawberries), resveratrol (in blueberries), vitamin C
Broccoli, greens, spinach	Beta carotene, lutein, vitamin C
Brown rice	Selenium
Carrots	Beta carotene
Chicken	Selenium
Citrus fruits	Vitamin C
Corn	Lutein
Egg	Lutein (in yolks); selenium, vitamin A
Eggplant	Anthocyanins
Garlic and onions	Selenium
Grapefruit, pink	Lycopene, vitamin C
Grapes, red wine	Anthocyanins (in red and purple grapes), resveratrol
Mango and papaya	Beta carotene, vitamin C
Milk	Vitamin A
Nuts, nut butters, oils, seeds	Vitamin E
Oatmeal	Selenium
Peanuts	Resveratrol
Prunes	Anthocyanins
Salmon, tuna, seafood	Selenium
Sweet potatoes	Beta carotene, vitamin C
Tea, black or green	Catechins
Tomatoes (canned)	Lycopene, vitamin C
Watermelon	Lycopene, vitamin C
Wheat germ, whole grains	Selenium, vitamin E