

Antioxidants in Fruits and Vegetables

What Do Antioxidants Do?

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

- Free radicals are unstable molecules that can damage your cells. Your body creates them when you digest food, breathe in cigarette smoke or pollution, and have exposure to UV light or radiation.
- 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 to what types of nutrients they provide. To get this wide variety, incorporate a range of vibrant colors!
- Be adventurous in the produce section:
 - ✓ Choose a colorful fruit or vegetable you have never tried before!
 - ✓ Encourage your family or friends to pick a new fruit or vegetable each time you shop.

Antioxidants by Color Found in Fruits and Veggies

Green - contain vitamin C and E, quercetin (flavonoid), indoles, isothiocyanates, and sulforaphane.

- Eat asparagus, broccoli, spinach, parsley, arugula, collard greens, endive, kale, lettuce, mustard greens, Swiss chard, turnip greens, and watercress.

Yellow/Orange - contain beta-carotene, a precursor to vitamin A, bioflavonoids, lutein, and selenium.

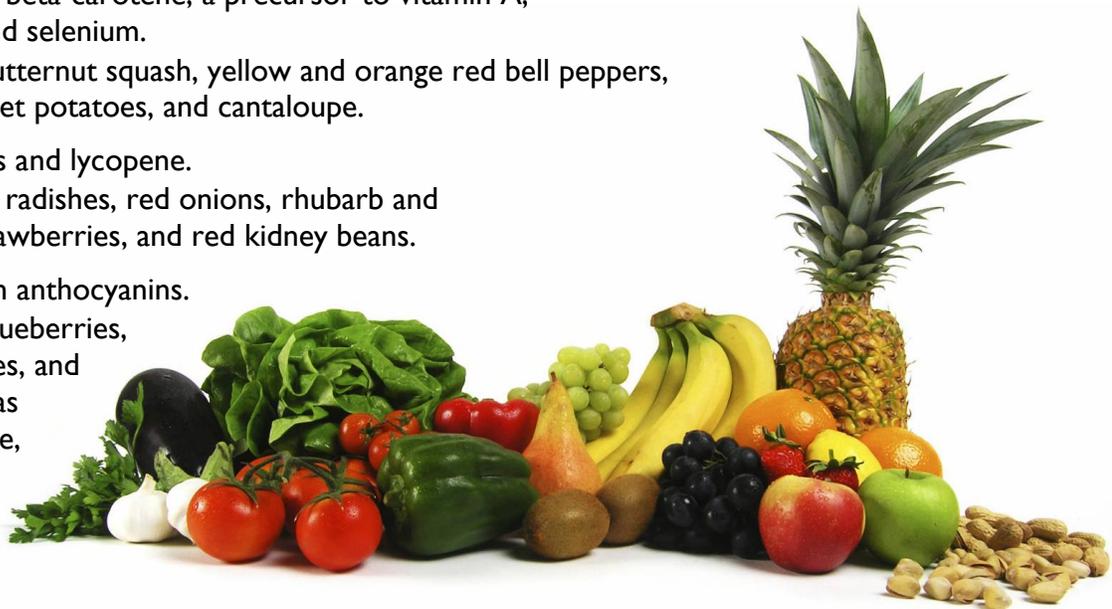
- Eat carrots, bananas, butternut squash, yellow and orange red bell peppers, pumpkin, corn and sweet potatoes, and cantaloupe.

Red - contain anthocyanins and lycopene.

- Eat beets, red peppers, radishes, red onions, rhubarb and tomatoes, cherries, strawberries, and red kidney beans.

Blue/Purple - also contain anthocyanins.

- Eat plums or prunes, blueberries, blackberries, cranberries, and black currants, as well as eggplant, purple cabbage, purple peppers, purple potatoes, and purple onions.



Types of Antioxidants

Many nutrients are antioxidants. Some examples may include:

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

Foods may contain other antioxidants and nutrients that are yet to be discovered. Eating a wide variety of foods will help your body get the full benefits of these antioxidants!