Natalie Brandenburg

Andrea Garen

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Extra Credit

Antioxidants

New products hit the market constantly with false advertising about the miracles they accomplish. Buy this! It will give you clear skin. Eat this! You will lose the extra weight. People lose sight of eating whole foods in their simplest form. By just eating foods in their more natural state rather than processed and injected with artificial sweeteners, one is able to receive many more benefits. In many foods, there are mechanisms fighting disease causing radicals. Antioxidants, “a compound that inhibits oxidation, which can cause deterioration and rancidity”, consists of “vitamins A, C, and E and the mineral selenium” which may also be added to foods to act as antioxidants to neutralize free radicals (Brown, pg. 46).

As stated earlier, antioxidants have the ability to prevent oxidation in foods which may lead to rancidity and deterioration. The USDA similarly states antioxidants to be “substances used to preserve food from deterioration, rancidity, or discoloration due to oxidation” (Brown, pg. 198). For this reason, antioxidants are often commercially added to products in which a longer shelf life is desired such as “dry cereals, crackers, nuts, chips, and flour mixes” (Brown, pg. 46).

What about getting in antioxidants the “easy way”? Antioxidants are naturally occurring in many of the foods we eat such as strawberries, raspberries, blueberries, vegetables, and more. A study divided foods into sections to research the amount of antioxidants in various food groups and found “comparing the mean value of the 'Meat and meat products' category with plant based categories, fruits, nuts, chocolate and berries have from 5 to 33 times higher mean antioxidant content than the mean of meat products” (Carlson…, 2010) So yes, a little bit of high quality chocolate at night could help fight free radicals! It is more common knowledge, but researchers found “with their high content of phytochemicals such as flavonoids, tannins, stilbenoids, phenolic acids and lingan [[43](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2841576/#B43)-[45](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2841576/#B45)] berries and berry products are potentially excellent antioxidant sources” (Carlson, 2010). Other major sources include: spices, herbs, tea, coffee, nuts, tomatoes, and more. With a balanced diet of fruits, vegetables, seeds, and more, many antioxidants are easily consumed.

References

1. BROWN, A. C. (2018). *UNDERSTANDING FOOD: principles and preparation*. S.l.: CENGAGE LEARNING.
2. Carlsen, M. H., Halvorsen, B. L., Holte, K., Bøhn, S. K., Dragland, S., Sampson, L., . . . Blomhoff, R. (2010). The total antioxidant content of more than 3100 foods, beverages, spices, herbs and supplements used worldwide. *Nutrition Journal,* *9*(1). doi:10.1186/1475-2891-9-3