

[IMAGE]

## **Breathe Easier with Antioxidants**

If you live in a metropolis, you are probably all-too-familiar with the brown cloud of pollution that envelops you. An estimated 130 million Americans reside in areas where atmospheric ozone - a major component of photochemical smog - consistently exceeds levels that people should not be exposed to even three days per year. Ozone gas exposure is an ever-present public health problem because it damages cells in the human body. Besides moving to the country, how can you reduce your risk for ozone-induced lung injury?

The authors of a recent study in the *American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine* determined the effects of dietary antioxidants on lung function and inflammation resulting from ozone exposure. Thirty-one men and women, ages 18-35, were divided into a group given antioxidant supplements or a control group. The first group was given vitamin C supplements and blended carrot and tomato juices for two weeks. Controls received a placebo pill (e.g. sugar) and placebo drink that did not contain antioxidants. All individuals were then exposed to ozone gas, and lung function and tissue inflammation were measured.

Although antioxidants appeared to have no effect on the severity of lung inflammation, lung function was significantly better in the supplementation group than in the control group after ozone inhalation. Also, concentrations of vitamins in the blood remained significantly higher in the supplementation group during the experiment.

If you live in a polluted city, eat plenty of antioxidant-rich produce, such as strawberries, tomatoes, carrots, and winter squash. The vitamins in these foods provide numerous health benefits beyond their potential impact on lung function - from reducing risk of cancer to preventing sickness by boosting the immune system.

*Reference:* Samet JM, Hatch GE, Horstman D, et al. Effect of antioxidant supplementation on ozone-induced lung injury in human subjects. *American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine* 2001;164(5), pp. 819-825.

To learn more about the benefits of vitamins and minerals, go to <http://www.chiroweb.com/tyh/nutrients.html>.

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