

[IMAGE]

Antioxidants for the Brain

By Editorial Staff

You've probably heard about antioxidants and how eating foods that contain them is beneficial for your health, but do you really appreciate the profound power these compounds appear to exert – even on brain health? With dementia (the most common form of which is Alzheimer's) receiving increasing attention and concern, it's time to examine how what we eat can help preserve the integrity of our brain as we age.

Antioxidants may hold the key, according to research. In layperson's terms, antioxidants are substances that help prevent or slow cell damage. When our cells get damaged, particularly with age, bad things generally happen: cancer, disease, dysfunction ... and in the case of the brain, dementia. Common antioxidants you may have heard about include vitamin A, C and E (although countless others exist), which is why many fruits and vegetables are touted as powerful antioxidant foods. In fact, the term *superfood* is often attributed to foods with high antioxidant content.

Back to the brain: When it comes to protecting the brain from dementia, higher antioxidant levels are associated with greater protection. In fact, per a new study published in *Neurology*, among more than 7,000 people (ages 45 or older at the start of the study), the risk of developing signs of dementia over the next 16 years was significantly lower for those with higher blood levels of antioxidants. The higher the blood level of antioxidants, the lower the risk of developing dementia.

Which specific antioxidants? Lutein, zeaxanthin and beta-cryptoxanthin. You've heard of vitamin A, C and E, but not these antioxidants? Here's the scoop: Lutein and zeaxanthin are found in green, leafy vegetables – kale, broccoli, spinach and the like; beta-cryptoxanthin in fruits such as oranges, tangerines and papaya. Talk to your doctor for more information about antioxidant-rich foods and how to incorporate them into a balanced, healthy diet.

Page printed from:

http://www.toyourhealth.com/mpacms/tyh/article.php?id=3030&no_paginate=true&no_b=true