

[IMAGE]

Heart-Healthy Antioxidants

By Editorial Staff

Antioxidant – you’ve probably heard the word, but do you know what it means and why it’s so important? To appreciate the power of antioxidants, you need to first understand their counterparts: *oxidants*: free radicals that interact with healthy cells to cause damage. What causes oxidants to accumulate in the body? Bad health habits: smoking, drinking alcohol, eating a diet high in fat, sugar and processed foods etc. Oxidants are thought to play a role in everything from cancer to cardiovascular disease, to Alzheimer’s and Parkinson’s.

Antioxidants are substances that counteract oxidants, helping prevent oxidant-related damage from occurring. In terms of heart health, researchers have identified several that appear to be more beneficial than others. In reviewing nearly 900 studies involving 883,000 people, they determined that among 27 antioxidant supplements studied, omega-3 fatty acids, folic acid and coenzyme Q₁₀ (CoQ₁₀) were most effective, reducing death from cardiovascular disease, stroke risk and all-cause mortality, respectively. Other micronutrients, including omega-6 fatty acids, L-arginine, L-citrulline, vitamin D, magnesium, zinc, alphalipoic acid, melatonin, catechin, curcumin, flavanol, genistein and quercetin, also appeared to reduce cardiovascular risk to some extent.

Note: According to the research review, published in the *Journal of the American College of Cardiology*, vitamin C, vitamin D, vitamin E and selenium did not influence cardiovascular disease outcomes or type 2 diabetes risk. However, that doesn’t mean those antioxidants aren’t beneficial in other non-cardiovascular respects. Talk to your doctor for more information about the power of antioxidants!

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