
The benefits of antioxidant-rich foods for the body and health

The benefits of antioxidant-rich foods – for inside and out health – cannot be overstressed. That is true even when it comes to obtaining a healthier complexion that glows, as this 518-word article attests. Citing advice from professionals in the field of nutrition, included is a guide that contains three common antioxidant nutrients as well as best sources.

Although there is no conclusive proof that antioxidants keep skin from aging, experts do agree they have the ability to ‘capture’ free radicals and may protect us from certain diseases. Antioxidant-rich foods can also give us a healthier, glowing complexion.

According to Susan M. Kleiner, R.D., Ph.D, a Seattle-based nutritionist, eating foods rich in antioxidants is best. “There’s no substitute for getting nutrients through food. The body absorbs and assimilates them far better than in supplement form”. Kleiner suggests following the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Food Guide Pyramid, and eating three to five servings of vegetables and two to four servings of fruit each day. Choose at least one citrus fruit, such as an orange, a tangerine, or a grapefruit, for vitamin C. To increase beta-carotene intake, eat at least two orange-yellow or leafy green vegetables each day. **Eat Right for Younger Looking Skin** Eating healthy equals younger looking skin. Drinking a cup of orange juice and eating one raw carrot provides twice the Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA) of vitamin C and beta-carotene. The RDA for vitamin E is harder to meet, especially for those on a low-fat diet. “Don’t be afraid to add a couple of tablespoons of olive oil to your diet, or to eat some nuts or seeds”, advises Dr. Kleiner.

The following guideline can be used for RDAs for three of the most common antioxidant nutrients, vitamin C, vitamin E, and beta-carotene; good sources and how best to maximize benefits of each are included.

Vitamin C: RDA at least 60 mg. (1/2 cup orange juice = 70 mg.) Citrus fruits and juices and tomatoes are good sources of vitamin C. Eat whole fruit for extra fiber. Avoid juice in glass containers, and heat-pasteurized juice. Light and heat destroy some of the vitamin C.

Vitamin E: RDA 8 mg for women / 10 mg. for men (1 tablespoon of canola oil = 9 mg.) Good sources include nuts, seeds and their oils, fatty fish such as salmon, mackerel, halibut, and trout, and wheat germ. Use canola, olive, or another vegetable oil in place of butter or margarine when cooking.

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Beta-carotene: no established RDA. Expert Dr. Kleiner, however, recommends 5-6 mg. (One carrot = 12 mg.) Orange and yellow vegetables, and leafy green vegetables, including broccoli, are all good sources. Instead of potato chips or popcorn for an evening snack while watching television, opt for prepackaged, washed and peeled baby carrots.

If you feel you are unable to meet the RDAs through diet alone, by all means take an all-in-one antioxidant vitamin supplement a day, but continue to pay attention to rich food sources.

Because many over-the-counter cosmetics containing antioxidants don't have enough to be totally affective by themselves, it is best to 'feed' them to your skin in combination with a healthy, antioxidant rich diet for younger looking skin.

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