



PERSPECTIVE

Importance of Antioxidants in Food

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Description

Antioxidants are substances that protect the body by making unstable molecules called free radicals. They grow when atoms in the body gain or lose charged particles called electrons. Free radicals are not all bad. They play a key role in many biological processes including cell division. They also help cells to talk to each other and help your body protect against infection.

They can help prevent cancer. Some studies indicate that antioxidants can prevent further damage caused by free radicals that can lead to cancer. But more research is needed to determine if antioxidants from food can help reduce the risk of human cancer. They can help your heart. There is much debate about whether antioxidants help reduce people's chances of developing heart disease. On the other hand, studies have shown that people who eat a lot of fruits and vegetables have a lower risk of heart disease and stroke. Previous research has shown that antioxidants may be responsible for this benefit.

Antioxidants are present in many foods, and everyone has heard of them at one time or another or seen them listed as additives on food packaging. Antioxidants play a key role in ensuring that our foodstuffs keep their taste and colour and remain edible over a longer period. Their use is very important in preventing oxidation of fats and fat-containing products. When antioxidants are properly mixed with fats or oils, the onset of the final stages of autoxidation in which rancidity the development of an unpleasant taste

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and odour becomes apparent, is delayed. Another important reason is that certain vitamins and amino acids can be easily destroyed by exposure to air, and antioxidants protect them. They also help slow the aging process of fruits and vegetables.

To increase the range of natural antioxidants, efforts are made to find new plant substances on purpose. Scientists have discovered that a number of plant substances, such as those in sage and rosemary, are active antioxidants. However, there are two important factors that must always be considered in food production. One is that natural products are not automatically safe for human health, and the other is that natural plant products often have a strong, distinct taste, by themselves. This is the reason why freshly invented items are not always used in food production and, in any case, will need to be fully tested for safety as stipulated in the food ingredients and food novels.

Antioxidants are important for animal and plant health as they are involved in complex metabolic processes and signalling mechanisms. They protect plants by producing phytoalexins, e.g., isoflavonoid structures, in response to microbiological and fungal pathogen attacks.

Dietary antioxidants play an important role in the food industry, and have become one of the most widespread ways to preserve food. Their cheapness and ease of use made them part of almost every foodstuffs. Although different, all groups of food antioxidants have the same purpose, saving food for as long as possible without altering it, giving it a taste or colour.