

## Editorial on Antioxidants

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### EDITORIAL

**Antioxidants** are the substances that can prevent or slow damage to the cells caused by free radicals -unstable molecules produced by body as a reaction to environmental and other pressures. Antioxidants can protect against the cell damage that free radicals cause, known as oxidative stress. The damage caused by oxidative stress has been linked to cancer, atherosclerosis, and vision loss. Oxidative stress may be due to common environmental and lifestyle factors such as smoking, a diet high in inflammatory fats and sugar, alcohol, toxins, over-exercise, chronic stress and lack of antioxidants in the diet.

### Types and Benefits:

There are five types of antioxidants and they all have good but slightly different benefits.

- **Alpha Lipoic Acid:** This is a fatty acid made by the body, and plays a key role in energy production and metabolism. It is essential for reducing inflammation. This antioxidant is excellent for general use and especially to support healthy blood sugar levels.
- **Astaxanthin:** It is part of the carotenoid family of antioxidants and has powerful health benefits. This compound gives salmon its pink color and has been shown to lower your risk of heart disease by increasing HDL cholesterol and reducing oxidation of LDL cholesterol. It even helps with anti-aging.

- **Lutein:** It is a potent antioxidant that is found especially in eggs, but also in green, leafy veggies and plays an important role in protection against eye diseases. This antioxidant is particularly important in poor night vision, as it can help to improve vision in low contrast situations.
- **Pycnogenol:** It is also known as pine bark extract, *pycnogenol* can be the perfect support during menopause. It helps in relieving menopausal symptoms and reduces stress. Pycnogenol also aids in healthy circulation and blood pressure.
- **Resveratrol:** It is most well known as the healthy component of red wine, but can also be found in blueberries, grapes, and peanuts. It is a powerful anti-inflammatory antioxidant and beneficial for those with heart disease and other conditions. But heavy consumption of wine can undermine the effects of Resveratrol.

To maintain a healthy life, it is important to maintain the balance between antioxidants and oxidants. However, the free radicals or oxidants usually outnumber the antioxidants that are naturally produced in the body. Hence, it is important to have a continuous supply of antioxidants from an external source to maintain this balance. Diet is this external source and it must be packed with good quality antioxidants which in turn provide other benefits like anti-ageing, and lowering the risk of heart disease. A diet rich in antioxidants also helps in active brain and healthy gut. All these factors help in improving the quality and length of your life.

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