

Antioxidants

An *antioxidant* is a compound which is capable of slowing or preventing the oxidation or destruction of substances in the body. Some antioxidants are also *essential nutrients*, such as Vitamins A, C, and E or minerals Selenium and Zinc. An *essential nutrient* must be obtained from food because it cannot be made by the body.

Other antioxidants are *phytochemicals* (phyto means plant) which are compounds found in plants that act as antioxidants to reduce risk of disease. They are not essential nutrients and yet are contained in food and have a beneficial impact on health. These include substances such as Lycopene, Lutein, Zeaxanthin Flavenoids, Phenols, Sterols & Stanols.

Nutrients that function as antioxidants:

Vitamin A, in the form of β -Carotene, which is the form of Vitamin A found in plants acts as an antioxidant.

β -Carotene is:

- a precursor to active Vitamin A.
- a pigment, orange and yellow, in foods.
- found in c foods such as carrots, squash, apricots, peaches, dark green leafy vegetables, like spinach and kale.
- a strong antioxidant which lowers the risk of heart disease, stroke and cancer.
- an antioxidant whose effect is best when eaten in food, not as effective in supplements.

Vitamin C

Vitamin E

Selenium

- **Used as part of antioxidant enzyme systems**
- **Amount in food is dependent on soil content**
- **Contained in meat, seafood, grains, brasil nuts, eggs**
- **Can be used in place of Vitamin E when not enough Vitamin E**

Zinc

Other Carotenes:

Lycopene =

- **Red or pink pigment in food**



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Contractual Health Agency for:
Bernards Township
Bernardsville Borough
Chester Borough
Long Hill Township
Mendham Borough
Peapack and Gladstone Borough

Antioxidants

- Tomatoes, watermelon, red or pink grapefruit
- Absorbed better from cooked food
- Strong antioxidant
- Reduces risk fo Prostate Cancer &

Heart Disease

Lutein & Zeaxanthin

- Not a vitamin but still a Carotenoid
- Contributes to healthy vision
- Kale, spinach, collard greens, dark green leafy vegetables, eggs, citrus

=

Zeaxanthin

Flavenoids

Sterols & Stanols

Phenols



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