

Reduce The Signs Of Aging With Antioxidants

Antioxidants are the body's main defense against free radicals as they work against the substances that create oxidants and the reactive substances that result from oxidation and reduction. Antioxidants neutralize free radicals by supplying the missing electron so that the molecule may be stabilized. There are many different types of antioxidants ranging from dietary antioxidants to those that the body produces itself. The four major antioxidant nutrients are vitamin A (beta carotene), vitamin C, vitamin E, and selenium. Vitamin A, the first vitamin to ever be isolated, is essential for the proper function of the eyes and maintenance of the skin. It is found in the retina of all mammals as well as the liver. Vitamin A works to increase our resistance to infections by keeping all the linings in the body healthy. It is necessary for the health and moisture of the skin and the specialized cells lining the eyes, nose, mouth, throat, lungs, esophagus, stomach intestines, and urinary tract. When these cells don't have sufficient vitamin A, they thicken and harden, which is extremely detrimental to health and makes us more susceptible to infection. Vitamin A also protects the body from cardiovascular disease and cancer, and is necessary for new cell growth, something that is extremely important in slowing the aging process. Beta carotene is the best known of the two carotenoids that form vitamin A, being composed of two vitamin A molecules that are split apart by liver enzymes when the body is low in vitamin A. If body levels are sufficient, the enzymes remain inactive and beta carotene does not divide, making it a safe source of vitamin A, without producing the toxic effects that come with high levels of vitamin A itself. If excess beta carotene is consumed it is stored in fat tissue or circulated in the blood. Beta carotene is one of the most powerful antioxidant nutrients as it can prevent free radical formation and inactivate existing free radicals. Once free radicals have been formed, it traps them and breaks the chain reaction that occurs. Vitamin C holds a crucial role in many body processes that are necessary for life, among these being its role in collagen formation. Collagen is important in the every structure of the body, as it works like glue to bind cells together to form tissues. The integrity of collagen depends on vitamin C. Vitamin C also functions as one of the most powerful free radicals to prevent the damage that contributes to aging and age-related diseases. It also works against pollution and toxins that damage cells and cause mutations, possibly even reducing some food carcinogens and protecting lung lining fluids against damage by air pollution. Vitamin C is important in the immune system and it also increases immunity to infectious diseases, lowers total cholesterol, enhances the effect of vitamin E, promotes wound healing, growth, tissue repair, and helps with the utilization of iron. Vitamin E prevents aging by prolonging the useful life of cells found in the body. It also works to protect vitamin C and vitamin A from free radical activity so that they may remain potent. Vitamin E has the ability to stop a free radical chain reaction as it is happening and plays an extremely important role in preventing the per-oxidation of lipids (cholesterol). It protects the cell membrane, which in turn causes it to help protect the body from disease. Selenium, one of the ten essential trace minerals, can be found in all tissues of the body. It is best known for its antioxidant role and its function in fighting cancer. It protects the liver from damage and works to stop lipid per-oxidation. Selenium is vital in maintaining the elasticity of body tissues and preventing the oxidation of fatty tissue, in turn combating the effects of aging. Selenium causes the skin to be healthier, muscle mass and tone are more easily maintained, and the heart is strengthened. Selenium works along with vitamin E, enhancing the effects of each other. It is important to get our vitamins and minerals on a daily basis to maintain a health happier life.

About the Author

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