

# Antioxidants and Heart Disease



Enjoying a variety of foods from different food groups is the key to healthy eating and helps ensure that your body gets plenty of antioxidants.

## What are antioxidants?

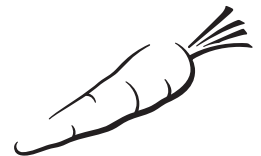


Antioxidants include vitamin C, vitamin E, beta carotene, and flavonoids. Antioxidants stop molecules known as 'free radicals' from attacking and damaging healthy cells in your body. By enjoying foods rich in antioxidants you can help reduce your risk of heart disease.

## How do I increase my intake of antioxidants?

Antioxidants are mainly found in plant-based foods. To enjoy healthy eating and ensure you eat plenty of antioxidants, the Heart Foundation recommends following an eating pattern which is:

- rich in vegetables and fruit
- rich in wholegrain cereals and cereal products
- low in saturated fat
- low in added salt
- high in dietary fibre.



## Which foods contain antioxidants?

### *Vegetables and fruit*

- Dark green leafy vegetables such as spinach and parsley
- Strongly flavoured vegetables such as broccoli, cabbage, onion and capsicum
- Yellow and orange vegetables and fruit such as carrots, pumpkin, tomatoes, sweet potato and apricots
- Citrus fruit such as oranges, grapefruit and lemons
- Other fruit such as kiwi fruit, apples, mangoes, paw paw, strawberries, guava, berries and pineapple



## Tea

- Particularly black and green leaf tea



## Wholegrain breads and cereals

- Rice
- Pasta
- Noodles
- Wheatgerm

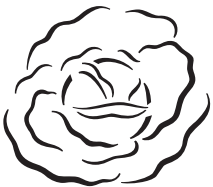


## Fats and Oils

- Vegetable oils such as sunflower, safflower, soybean, canola and olive oils
- Polyunsaturated and monounsaturated margarine spreads

## Tips to help you increase consumption of plant-based foods

- Try fruit milkshakes or smoothies made with reduced fat milk.
- Add fruit or nuts to your breakfast cereal.
- Snack on tinned or fresh fruit.
- Have fruit salad for dessert.
- Choose wholegrain varieties of breads and cereals.
- Try vegetable soup with a grainy bread roll.



- Add plenty of salad vegetables to sandwiches and rolls.
- Have baked beans on toast.
- Add legumes (e.g. dried peas, dried beans or lentils) to casseroles or soups.
- Snack on plain unsalted nuts or add them to salad and stir fries.
- Choose vegetable or tomato-based sauces to have with pasta and noodles.
- Try a stir fry with lots of vegetables and rice.



## What about antioxidant supplements?

At this stage there is not enough evidence to recommend using antioxidant vitamin supplements to prevent or treat heart disease.



The best way to ensure your body gets plenty of antioxidants is to make sure you eat plenty of plant-based foods such as vegetables, fruit, breads and cereals.

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For further information contact Heartline, the Heart Foundation's national telephone information service, on **1300 36 27 87**, or visit **[www.heartfoundation.com.au](http://www.heartfoundation.com.au)**.

If you want specific dietary information call **1800 81 29 42** to find an Accredited Practising Dietitian near you.