

Go to the source

Most antioxidants come from food, especially fruits and vegetables. Many come from beans (including not only the legumes like kidney beans and pinto beans, but also coffee beans and cocoa beans) and nuts (pecans, walnuts, and hazelnuts have the most). Here are some of the main antioxidants, along with good food sources for them.

Vitamins, minerals, and hormones

Vitamin A (retinol). Food sources include colorful vegetables and fruits: dark green (broccoli, collards, kale), purple (blueberries), orange (apricots, cantaloupe, carrots, mangoes, squash, sweet potatoes), red (tomatoes), and yellow (squash). It is also synthesized from beta-carotene by the body.

Vitamin C (ascorbic acid). Food sources include not only citrus fruits but also black currants, blueberries, and strawberries, as well as green leafy vegetables, peppers, and tomatoes (which are botanically fruits).

Vitamin E (includes tocopherols and tocotrienols). Food sources include wheat germ, nuts, seeds, and whole grains; vegetable oil and fish-liver oil; and green leafy vegetables.

Carotenoids

Alpha-carotene is found in carrots,

chard, cilantro, green beans, tomatoes, and winter squash.

Astaxanthin comes from red algae and the animals that feed on it, like crustaceans and salmon.

Beta-carotene is found in butternut squash, carrots, pumpkins, and sweet potatoes, plus broccoli, kale, spinach, and turnip greens.

Lutein is found in beet greens, chard, collard greens, endive, kale, mustard greens, and spinach.

Lycopene is found in highest concentrations in cooked tomato products, like canned tomatoes and tomato sauce.

Zeaxanthin is found in dark leafy greens, corn, and broccoli.

Flavonoids

There are dozens of these compounds, which appear in many different berries — especially the superstar antioxidant fruit, blueberries, which are rich in *anthocyanins* — plus coffee and tea.

And more

Other antioxidants include *capsaicin* (found in chili peppers), *curcumin* (found in turmeric), and *resveratrol* (found most famously in red wine, but also in peanuts and dark chocolate).

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