10 Ways To Get More Antioxidants Into Your Diet

Summary:

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Given all we know about antioxidants and their beneficial properties, it’s amazing more people don’t get enough fruits and vegetables, the primary sources of antioxidants. Experts recommend a minimum of 5 servings of fruits and vegetables daily, but say getting 7-10 servings is best.

There are 10 steps to getting more antioxidants into your diet.

1.Breakfast

Breakfast doesn’t have to be a hurried toaster tart on the way out the door. Throw some strawberries, 100% juice and yogurt into a blender; pour your delicious mixture into a cup and head out the door. You’ve just added one to three servings of fruits to your daily intake. Or throw some berries onto your cold or hot cereal.

Say you truly have no time in the morning and usually grab something on the run. Even the Golden Arches can be some help here. Order a fruit and yogurt parfait and some apple slices. For about $2, you have a breakfast providing one to two servings of fruit.

2.Snacks

Here’s an easy way to get more antioxidants in your diet. How about a handful of raisins for a snack, or some fresh red grapes? Dip some strawberries in yogurt. You’ll feel decadent, but the berries provide the color you’re looking for. Need crunch? How about some baby carrots dipped in hummus? Consider a handful of pecans for crunch and a nice antioxidant boost.

3.Lunch and dinner

It might sound trite, but adding a salad to each of your main daily meals can add loads to your overall health and well-being. They don’t have to be boring, and they don’t have to be just salad greens. If you’re going classic, add some red pepper slices to your green salad, some tomatoes to the Greek salad, or tart cranberries to your field greens. Whip up a broccoli salad for lunch, or be adventurous and mix up a rice salad with a mélange of fresh vegetables like string beans, tomatoes, peppers and red onions.

4.Dessert

Berries, with or without whipped cream or chocolate are a wonderful way to end your day of healthy, antioxidant-rich eating.

5.Beverages

Replace your soda with tea or coffee, both of which boast antioxidant compounds. Have a glass of wine with dinner, or for a real change of pace, pour a glass of chai tea.

6.Think outside the box

We know we can get our antioxidant fix from berries, salads and the like, but researchers say powerful antioxidants can also be found in a variety of unexpected foods, like russet potatoes, artichokes, and small red beans. The beans, in fact, may have more antioxidant power than blueberries, experts say. So to your rice salad full of vegetables, add some beans for even more antioxidants.

7.Cook lightly

You think you’re being good, preparing vegetables each night for your family’s dinner. But if you’re overcooking the vegetables, you’re cooking out a lot of the beneficial properties of the antioxidants. Steam (don’t boil) vegetables, and stop cooking them when they will have all of their bright color and most of their bite.

8.Plant a garden

Experts believe that people who plant and harvest vegetables from their own yards are far more likely to eat more vegetables and fruits than people who buy their produce from the store. So plant a garden, watch it grow and eat the fruits (literally) of your labor.

9.Take your healthy diet on vacation

Too many of us consider going on vacation an opportunity to take a vacation from everything, including healthy eating. Think of vacation as a way to be introduced to new foods. Order an interesting vegetable dish in a restaurant and then pay attention to how the chef prepared the dish.

10.Learn to cook

If you’re cooking, you’re not opening bags and boxes. Cooking involves scrubbing and peeling vegetables, preparing whole foods and paying attention to how things are cooked. If you’re ordering out every night, you’re far less likely to be eating the whole foods and natural fruits and vegetables that provide the base for our antioxidant intake.