



## Antioxidant rich foods for everyday eating and how to incorporate these into your diet

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### FUTURELIFE® Fun Facts:

- Antioxidant supplements are not as effective at reducing oxidative stress as consuming foods rich in antioxidants. This is due to the fact that the antioxidants work in an integrated manner to provide health benefits.
- Blackberries, strawberries, blueberries, coffee, walnuts, chocolate and red wine are some of the foods containing the highest concentrations of antioxidants per serving.
- Purchase your fruit from cheaper vendors such as directly from farmers at Farmer's markets.
- Aim to buy your fruit and veg after 16:00 at your major grocery stores as perishable items are usually marked-down at this time.
- Foods rich in antioxidants can be incorporated into the diet in many different ways: as snacks, smoothies, part of dishes, etc.
- Remember to stick to recommended serving sizes!
- FUTURELIFE® products contain various nutrients that have antioxidant functions.

### WHAT ARE ANTIOXIDANTS?

Antioxidants play an important role in maintaining our overall health as well as preventing diseases caused by free radicals. Some may think to take supplements containing a specific antioxidant (e.g.  $\beta$ -carotene) to ensure that they consume enough, however studies have shown that ingesting these supplements *do not reduce oxidative stress as effectively as consuming **foods** containing these antioxidants*<sup>1</sup>. This is thought to be due to the beneficial health effect that is provided by other antioxidants found in food, as they work in an integrated manner<sup>1</sup>. There is a wide range of antioxidants that occur in a variety of different foods, but which foods contain the highest concentrations of these, and how do we incorporate them into the diet in order to ensure we achieve an adequate intake?

### FOODS RICH IN ANTIOXIDANTS

A study was conducted by BL Havorsen *et al.* to determine the antioxidant content of 1113 different foods. They analysed the antioxidant content of an item per typical serving size in order to ascertain the foods with the highest antioxidant content in amounts that we would normally consume (no point in comparing per 100g, as no one would consume that amount of cloves at a sitting for

example). The list below indicates the top 15 foods with the highest concentration of antioxidants per typical serving size of each item in order.

1. Blackberries
2. Walnuts
3. Strawberries
4. Prepared artichokes
5. Cranberries
6. Coffee
7. Raspberries
8. Pecans
9. Blueberries
10. Cloves, ground
11. Grape juice
12. Chocolate
13. Cranberry juice
14. Sour Cherries
15. Red wine



## HOW TO INCORPORATE THESE FOODS INTO YOUR DIET

### Cost implications

Firstly, looking at this list you will notice that most of the food items happen to be some of the most expensive products on the shelf. In today's recession we may view these items as luxury and avoid buying them. My suggestion for this is to try and purchase your fruit from cheaper vendors such as directly from farmers at Farmer's markets, etc. You can also aim to buy your fruit and veg after 16:00 at your major grocery stores, such as Checkers and Pick 'n' Pay, as they tend to mark-down the cost of perishable items at this time.

However, some of the items happen to be things that we may consume all the time already: coffee (I'm sure you're doing a little dance right now), grape juice and red wine (YAY!). As always, too much of a good thing can be a bad thing. Aim to stick to the recommended servings of each:

- Coffee: 2 – 4 cups per day (probably best to use fresh coffee as opposed to instant, as this is less processed and likely to retain more antioxidants)
- Grape juice: 125ml/day diluted with water
- Red wine: one serving for females and two servings for males per day (serving: 125 – 150ml)

### Ideas for inclusion in the diet

Below I have listed a few ideas for what you can do with these foods, but you can get creative - your imagination is the limit!

#### Fruit

- All the fruit items can be enjoyed as a snack – remember to stick to recommended serving size (which generally ranges from  $\frac{1}{3}$  –  $\frac{2}{3}$  of a cup)!
- The fruit can also be added to smoothies that can be consumed as a meal replacement, like breakfast, or as a snack during the day.

- Fruit makes a lovely twist to a salad, bringing in some sweetness or even tartness in the case of sour cherries.
- You can also use the fruit to bake some treats like cherry pie. The study mentioned previously indicated that processing should have minimal impact on the content of antioxidants.

### **Nuts**

- Nuts can also be consumed as a snack, but take care to stick to a recommended portion size as they contain a high amount of fat. Even though the fat found in nuts is considered to be “healthy fat”, studies have shown that consuming excessive calories (as a whole) has harmful effects, and if care is not taken with how many nuts one consumes, this can contribute to an excessive caloric intake.
- Nuts can be added to a number of other dishes such as: salads, cereal, yoghurt and smoothies.

### **Miscellaneous**

- Artichokes can be used in a number of ways: grill them on the braai and use a dipping sauce to eat them, they make an interesting addition as a topping on a pizza, you can add them to stews, they can be the star of a salad, you can make artichoke fritters, etc.
- Cloves have a lovely strong, spicy flavour that has a warm to hot taste. They can be used to flavour a number of different dishes: fruit pies, relishes and chutneys, you can poke them into a ham (great for the festive season), ground cloves can be added to cakes, you can also use cloves in breyani and it goes wonderfully with pumpkin and squash dishes<sup>2</sup>.
- Chocolate is definitely many-a-person’s Achilles’ heel! So it is so fitting that we now have an excuse to eat it. Alas, as mentioned multiple times previously, we need to ensure that we don’t over-indulge! Try to restrict yourself to only 1 – 2 blocks per day. Choose dark chocolate options, as these are likely to have a higher antioxidant content, being less refined.

### **WHERE DOES FUTURELIFE® FIT IN?**

Although FUTURELIFE® products are not marketed as containing antioxidants, they do however contain a number of antioxidants that will provide health benefits:

- Vitamin A
- Vitamin C
- Vitamin E
- Selenium
- Copper, zinc, manganese and iron which aid the enzymatic antioxidants

You can consume FUTURELIFE® as a meal replacement or a snack, and depending on how much fluid you add (water/milk) you can make a shake, or something more like porridge-consistency.

## **FUTURELIFE® ANTIOXIDANT-RICH BERRY SMOOTHIE**

### **Ingredients**

⅔ cup frozen mixed berries (blackberries, blueberries, strawberries, cranberries, raspberries)

2 - 3 walnuts or pecans

½ cup plain yogurt

½ cold water

3 heaped tablespoons powdered FUTURELIFE® of choice:

- FUTURELIFE® HIGH ENERGY Smart Food
- FUTURELIFE® HIGH PROTEIN Smart Food
- FUTURELIFE® ZERO
- FUTURELIFE® ZERO WITH OATS
- FUTURELIFE® Smart Oats



### **Method**

Add all the ingredients to your blender and blend together on full power until smooth. Serve and enjoy.

Serves 1 – meal

Serves 2 – snack

### **REFERENCES**

1. [Online] <http://ajcn.nutrition.org/content/84/1/95.full.pdf+html>.
2. [Online] <http://www.wikihow.com/Use-Cloves>.