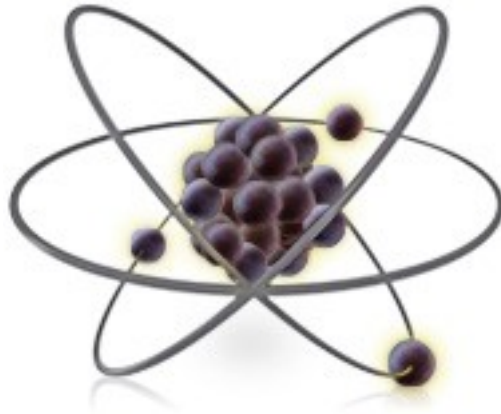




The Power of the Grape

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Antioxidants and Antioxidant Capacity



The role of dietary compounds in promoting good health continues to be a growing area of nutrition science. Research suggests that diets rich in fruits and vegetables play a role in supporting health.¹ This may be due in part to the antioxidant effects of the nutrients and phytonutrients (plant nutrients) found within these foods.

Antioxidants are compounds in foods and beverages that can help protect healthy cells from the effects of oxidative stress.^{2,3,4} Vitamins C, E and A (such as beta-carotene), and the mineral selenium, as well as certain phytonutrients (such as polyphenols) can act as antioxidants. Antioxidants neutralize free radicals by donating electrons, preventing them from stealing electrons from stable molecules.

Free Radicals are atoms or groups of atoms that have one or more unpaired electrons. Free radicals are a normal part of everyday life and are produced during activities like exercising or digestion. They are highly reactive, but our bodies have a natural defense system – so in small numbers, they are not a big problem. However, exposure to certain lifestyle and environmental factors like strenuous exercise, pollution and UV rays can result in the formation of excess free radicals. An abundance of unchecked free radicals may, over time, impact overall health.

ORAC (Oxygen Radical Absorbance Capacity) measures the antioxidant activity or power of certain foods and beverages and is considered by many scientists to be the preferred method for measuring antioxidant power.⁵ A higher ORAC score equals more antioxidant power and often means more plant nutrients (e.g. polyphenols).⁶ Note that ORAC measures antioxidant power in a laboratory and does not test antioxidant activity or health effects within the body.





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