

7 Fruits and Vegetables that Reverse the Signs of Aging

The human diet contains thousands of antioxidants--nutrients that may help do everything from preventing wrinkles to killing off cancerous cells. But while many foods from chocolate to popcorn promise these health benefits, your best bet for a long, vibrant future begins with produce.

Tomatoes

Lycopene, an antioxidant that can combat free radicals (molecules or ions that can damage healthy cells and suppress your immune system), gets the credit for tomatoes' ability to help protect against some cancers, including lung cancer. If possible, opt for Classica tomatoes--in a study of 13 tomato varieties, Classicas ranked highest in lycopene.

Kale

This popular leafy green is a major source of vitamin K (one cup cooked contains almost 12 times your recommended daily value), which may help ward off heart disease and osteoporosis. Ask for Winterbor kale at your local farmers' market--in addition to vitamin K, this variety contains high levels of fiber, which can help lower blood pressure and cholesterol levels.

Eggplant

The deep-purple skin gets its rich color and anti-aging power from nasunin, a nutrient that helps fight the spread of cancerous cells by cutting off the blood supply they need to multiply. Research also suggests that nasunin may slow the development of Alzheimer's disease by preventing free radicals from damaging neurons.

Red Bell Pepper

This immunity-boosting superstar contains roughly 60 percent more vitamin C--which triggers the production of white blood cells that fight off germs and bacteria--than its green counterpart. It may also keep you looking young: A study in *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* found that people with diets high in vitamin C were less prone to wrinkles, possibly because the nutrient spurs the production of collagen.

Blackberries

Rutin, a potentially lifesaving flavonoid (a class of antioxidants) found in high levels in this flavorful fruit, may block an enzyme linked to the formation of blood clots, lowering the risk of heart attack or stroke, according to a 2012 study from Harvard Medical School.

Basil

One of the herb's medicinal properties comes from the antioxidant eugenol. Recent lab

studies found that this compound sparks anticarcinogenic activity in cervical cancer cells, causing them to self-destruct.

Brussels Sprouts

Our cells are naturally equipped with tumor-suppressing genes, and the sulfur compounds found in Brussels sprouts may help those genes by blocking enzymes that promote tumor growth. A 2012 study also found that these sulfur compounds could play a key role in treating rheumatoid arthritis by reducing inflammation and activating cartilage-protecting proteins.