

Superfoods at a Glance



“Superfood” has become a popular buzzword in the media and although there is no real technical definition, foods that achieve superstar status are those that are nutrient-rich. These foods often contain some combination of vitamins, minerals, fiber, phytochemicals and often antioxidant properties.

Phytonutrients– commonly called phytochemicals

Components of plants responsible for:

- Smell
- Color
- Taste
- Defense mechanism

Bitter tasting leaf – deter animals from eating the plant

Health benefits to humans

- Aids in disease prevention
- Antioxidants

Common Phytonutrients

Carotenoids

Flavonoids (Polyphenols)

Inositol Phosphates (Phytates)

Lignans (Phytoestrogens)

Isothiocyanates and Indoles

Phenols and Cyclic Compounds

Saponins

Sulfides and Thiols

Terpenes

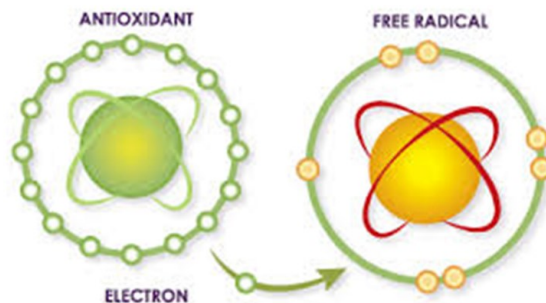
Antioxidants

Man-made or naturally occurring in food

Commonly found in fruits and vegetables

- Beta-carotene
- Lutein
- Vitamins A, C, & E

Help protect cells from harmful free radicals



Eating for Color

The colors, aromas, and flavors of a plant food give a hint of the type of phytonutrients it contains. Each colorful group of plant foods has its own unique benefit.

Red, Blue, Purple

Anthocyanins– Water-soluble

Due to antioxidant properties; may help reduce the risk of:

- Heart disease
- Cognitive decline



White to Pale Yellow

Anthoxanthins– Water-soluble

Due to antioxidant properties; may help reduce the risk of:

- Stomach cancer
- Heart disease



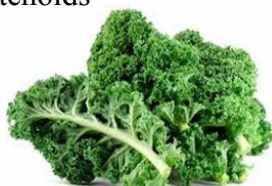
Green

Chlorophyll– provides green color

Also contain folate and carotenoids

May help reduce the risk of:

- Chronic disease
- Some cancers



Red, Orange, Yellow

Carotenoids– Fat-soluble

Converted to Vitamin A

May decrease the risk of:

- Some cancers
- Eye disease



Functional foods are foods that have a potentially positive effect on health beyond basic nutrition. Functional foods promote optimal health and help reduce the risk of disease.

Examples

- Oatmeal contains soluble fiber and can help lower cholesterol levels
- Orange Juice fortified with calcium is good for bone health
- Folic acid reduces the risk of neural tube defects
- Polyunsaturated fatty acids reduce the risk of heart disease



Probiotics

Live microorganisms that help to maintain a healthy gut and aid in immune function.

Sources

- Yogurt
- Kefir
- Kombucha
- Sauerkraut

