SPECTRUM COMMUNITY SERVICES, INC.

MEALS ON WHEELS AMERICA 2026 Member

Nutrition Education

Food First for Antioxidants

Most research on antioxidant supplements has found little to no health benefits. This is likely because antioxidants work best with the other nutrients and plant properties naturally found in the whole food itself. **Consuming a diet rich in fruits, vegetables, legumes and whole grains maximizes the benefits of antioxidants and offers the greatest support for overall health.**

Sources: Eatright.org & Harvard Nutrition Source

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Antioxidants

What are antioxidants?

Antioxidants can be found in some foods and help protect cells against damage from free radicals. Free radicals are naturally made by our bodies and can also come from things in our environment, like sunlight, pollution, and cigarette smoke. In really high amounts, free radicals can cause damage. Thankfully antioxidant rich foods can help repair, protect and maintain the health of our cells.

What are good sources of antioxidants?

Carotenoids

Foods high in carotenoids may reduce risks of macular degeneration and reduce risks of developing certain cancers. They include red, orange, deep yellow and some dark green leafy fruits & vegetables.

- ***Food Sources:*** Apricots, asparagus, cantaloupe, bell peppers, kale, oranges, peaches, watermelon, sweet potatoes, spinach, carrots, tomatoes, Brussels sprouts, winter squash and broccoli.

Vitamin E

Vitamin E's main function is as an antioxidant and helps protect our cells from damage. When combined with other antioxidants, such as vitamin C, vitamin E may play a role in protecting against some chronic disease.

- ***Food Sources:*** Almonds, avocado, vegetable oils, wheat germ, whole grains and fortified cereals, sunflower seeds and peanut butter.

Vitamin C

Vitamin C acts as an antioxidant and also helps produce collagen, supports immune function, and helps the body absorb iron from plant foods.

- ***Food Sources:*** Citrus fruits (such as oranges, grapefruits, tangerines, & more), strawberries, sweet peppers, tomatoes, broccoli and potatoes.