



PHYTOCHEMICALS



What are Phytochemicals?





Phytochemicals are non-nutritive plant chemicals that have protective or disease preventive properties. They are non-essential nutrients, meaning that they are not required by the human body for sustaining life. It is well-known that plants produce these chemicals to protect themselves, but recent research demonstrate that they can also protect humans against diseases. There are more than thousand known phytochemicals. These phytochemicals are concentrated in colorful parts of the plants like fruits, vegetables, nuts, legumes, and whole grains. See table below for some food sources.

Phytochemicals Boost the Immune System

During this time of the COVID-19 virus, a very important health factor is having a strong and healthy immune system. Phytochemicals help to boost the immune system in several ways, they detoxify the body by neutralizing free radicals (unstable molecules that can damage cells), inhibiting enzymes that activate carcinogens, and inducing enzymes that remove cancer-causing agent and support overall healthy immune function. Our immune systems must be in the best shape possible to tackle invading pathogens.

6 PHYTOCHEMICALS YOU MAY KNOW ABOUT

PYTOCHEMICAL		PROPOSED BENEFITS	FOOD SOURCES	FUN FACTS
Beta-Carotene		Immune System Vision Skin Health Bone Health	Pumpkin, Sweet Potato, Carrots, Winter Squash, Cantaloupe, Apricots, Spinach, Collard Greens, Kale, Broccoli	Think orange and dark, leafy green veggies
Lycopene		Cancer (Prostate) Heart Health	Tomatoes, Pink Grapefruit, Red Peppers, Watermelon, Tomato Products	The heating process makes lycopene easier for the body to absorb

Lutein		<p>Eye Health Cancer Heart Health</p>	<p>Collard Greens, Kale, Spinach, Broccoli, Brussels Sprouts, Lettuces, Artichokes</p>	<p>This phytochemical is found in the macula of the eye</p>
Resveratrol		<p>Heart Health Cancer Lung Health Inflammation</p>	<p>Red Wine, Peanuts, Grapes</p>	<p>1 cup of red grapes can have up to 1.25 mg of resveratrol</p>
Anthocyanidins		<p>Blood Vessel Health</p>	<p>Blueberries, Blackberries, Plums Cranberries, Raspberries, Red Onions, Red Potatoes, Red Radishes, Strawberries</p>	<p>Think red and purple berries</p>
Isoflavones		<p>Menopause Cancer (Breast) Bone Health Joint Inflammation Lower Cholesterol</p>	<p>Soybeans</p>	<p>½ cup of boiled soybeans offer 47 mg of isoflavones</p>