

Examples of foods with anti-inflammatory properties

APPLES

-rich in quercetin (flavonol) and other polyphenolic antioxidants. These are particularly rich in the apple peel. Some compounds have been extracted from dried apple peel that may be useful in the treatment of irritable bowel syndrome by preventing inflammation in the gut wall.

RED BERRIES-RASPBERRIES, BLACKBERRIES

-rich in hydrobenzoic acid and other anti-oxidant polyphenols. These also include the anthocyanins-(a type of flavonoid) which gives the fruit its red, blue or purple colour- Anthocyanins can protect LDL cholesterol in the blood from becoming oxidised

BLUEBERRIES

Contain many antioxidant compounds including hydroxycinnamic acid and anthocyanin (type of flavonoid). Consumption of blueberry juice has been shown in one study to reduce oxidative changes leading to memory impairment in older adults

KIWIFRUIT

One of the richest sources of polyphenols among many different types of fruit. The "Gold" kiwifruit are particularly rich in polyphenols. Kiwifruit antioxidants can protect blood lipids from becoming oxidised. Regular consumption of kiwifruit has been found to have beneficial effects on sleep patterns

CHERRIES

Contain hydroxycinnamic acid and is also high in anthocyanins that give cherries their red colour. Cherry juice has been used to reduce oxidative damage in muscle in athletes after intense cycling

CITRUS FRUIT

Rich in Flavanones Grapefruit have the flavanone: naringenin while oranges have the flavanone hesperetin, these give the fruit a slightly bitter taste. And they have strong anti-inflammatory and anti-oxidant properties. A 6-month trial in older women showed that daily consumption of grapefruit juice had antioxidive effects and improved arterial function.

ONIONS

Contain hydrobenzoic acid and are also rich in quercetin (flavonol)- Quercetin inhibits inflammatory signals. Diets containing onions may be of particular benefit in allergic diseases like asthma

EGGPLANT/AUBERGINE

High in chlorogenic acid - the polyphenol content is particularly high in eggplant skin- so this should be eaten as well as the eggplant flesh

POTATOES

Contain the antioxidant chlorogenic acid. Antioxidant activity is highest in sweet potatoes with orange or purple flesh. Less antioxidant activity is found in potatoes with white flesh

GREEN TEA

Green tea (tea leaves that are unfermented) is very high in flavan-3-ols including catechin and epicatechin gallate. These have strong anti-oxidant activity. When green tea leaves are fermented to form black tea the flavan-3-ols become polymerised to form theaflavins and thearubigins These compounds are also useful but less powerful antioxidants. People who drink three or more cups of tea per day have a reduced risk of type 2 diabetes

OLIVES AND OLIVE OIL

The olive fruit contains over 230 known anti-oxidant compounds. The most common of these is oleuropein. As the olive ripens the oleuropein which has a bitter taste breaks down into hydroxytyrosol. Olives and olive oil are very important components of the Mediterranean diet.

NUTS

Nuts like almonds, walnuts and pistachios are rich in antioxidant compounds. These antioxidant compounds are particularly high in the skin of the nut. Several studies have shown that people who include nuts in their diet are at reduced risk of cardiovascular disease

SPINACH

Spinach is nutritionally very rich. Spinach leaves are one of the richest sources of antioxidants among the green leafy vegetables. Spinach anti-oxidants include thylakoids and lutein. It also is a source of vitamin C, vitamin E and vitamin A

PURSLANE

Purslane is a common wild plant that can be eaten as a green salad. It has very high antioxidant properties. It is a popular traditional medicine in China and it is a very rich source of omega-3 fatty acids.

BEANS AND LEGUMES

Legumes are also a source of antioxidants. In one study in healthy adults, an evening meal containing boiled brown beans by the next day had reduced a number of inflammatory markers in the blood. Antioxidants in beans may be particularly useful in protecting against inflammation in the lungs.

OILY FISH

Oily fish include small fish such as anchovies, sardines, and herrings as well as larger types like tuna, salmon, mackerel, trout and eel. Oily fish are an important source of omega 3- fatty acids which is found both in their flesh and in their skin. Omega 3- fatty acids are polyunsaturated fats that can be used by the body to form anti-inflammatory signaling molecules that can decrease or stop inflammatory responses. You do not have to eat fresh fish to obtain their benefit- you can eat frozen, smoked or tinned types- such as tinned sardines or frozen salmon. But try and eat the skin!