

Check your understanding



1 What are antioxidants, and how can they help fight cancer?

Antioxidants are chemical compounds that protect cells from damage. We can find them in certain foods, especially in fruits and vegetables. Antioxidants can help fight cancer by either stopping cancer cells from growing, or by stimulating our immune defense.

2 Can you think of other foods that contain antioxidants?

Pretty much all fruits and vegetables. Food with high levels of antioxidants are blueberries, cranberries and blackberries. Nuts like pecan and also dark chocolate also contain antioxidants.

3 What did the extract of our tomato do to cancer cells in the lab?

It stopped cancer cells from growing, to a larger extent than natural tomato extract

4 What do you think – could you just eat lots of antioxidants supplements and lots of vitamins (rather than fruit and vegetables) to stay healthy?

Supplements and vitamins should be consumed with caution. Fruits and vegetables contain many more beneficial compounds than the isolated substances found in supplements and vitamins that you can buy in a store. Often, different compounds in fruits and vegetables - some that we don't even know about yet - work together in ways that are more beneficial than just consuming the isolated supplements on their own. Plus, the fibers in fruits and vegetables are also very beneficial, and help keep your digestive system healthy.