

The Fountain of Youth

It may be in your refrigerator!

Imagine Ponce De Leon wading ashore with algae floating around his boots. Think of him picking blueberries and oranges to eat, and drinking red wine. The explorer, who is reputed to have been searching for the fountain of youth, may have found it! Recent research indicates that blue-green algae, colorful fruits and veggies, and red wine may all help to slow the aging process.

Free radicals vs. antioxidants

It's a classic tale of good and evil. For those of us who want to stay younger longer, the enemy is free radicals. Free radicals are unstable oxygen molecules that destabilize other molecules by stealing their electrons and turning them into free radicals. Ultimately, a chain reaction can result that damages the cells in our bodies. In fact, recent studies have found that free radicals play a role in many age-related diseases, including stroke, atherosclerosis, Parkinson's disease, Alzheimer's, and others.

Don't worry. There is a way to defend against free radicals. We need to eat foods that are rich in antioxidants. That's because antioxidants aren't damaged when free radicals steal their electrons. They are stable in either form so they help stabilize free radicals and prevent or minimize damage. According to the *Journal of Neuroscience*, these anti-aging superheroes are found in spirulina, spinach, red apples, cranberries, blueberries, cherries, and grapes. Recent experiments on the brain have shown that diets supplemented with antioxidants—like spirulina (blue-green algae)—improved neuron function and reversed impairments that are normally associated with aging.¹

A recipe for a longer life

Antioxidants are found in a variety of foods—primarily fruits and vegetables that provide vitamins C and E, beta-carotene, selenium, and lycopene. Make sure you get the antioxidants you need by having five to eight servings of fruits and vegetables each day. Green tea, red wine, and chocolate can help, too.

Antioxidants can be tasty!

Get your day off to a healthy start with a delicious antioxidant smoothie like the one described below. Or try adding blueberries, cherries, or prunes to your burgers—they could add years to your life.

Blueberry Smoothie

1 cup blueberries
1 cup pineapple or apple juice
½ tablespoon spirulina

¹ Gemma, C., Mesches, M.H., Sepesi, B., Choo, K., Holmes, D.B. & Bickford, P.C. 2002. Diets Enriched in Foods with High Antioxidant Activity Reverse Age-Induced Decreases in Cerebellar β -Adrenergic Function and Increases in Proinflammatory Cytokines. *Journal of Neuroscience*, 22, 6114-6120.

½ cup of nonfat plain yogurt
1 teaspoon of ground flaxseed
Almonds to taste

Mix all ingredients together in your blender:

Blueberry burger

1 cup fresh or frozen blueberries
1 pound lean ground beef
½ teaspoon salt
Pepper to taste

Put the blueberries in a food processor or blender and puree. Mix the puree with the other ingredients in a large bowl until they are evenly distributed. Make four hamburger patties and grill to your taste.