

Rehab News



Submitted By: Therapy Department at Healthcare Therapy Services, Inc.

Antioxidant Rich Foods Promote Healthy Aging

Heart disease causes more deaths in the United States than cancer, AIDs and car accidents combined. It is the leading cause of death for both men and women, claiming the lives of almost two people per minute. Keeping our hearts healthy is important and can be done with regular doctor visits, regular exercise and having a well-balanced diet, filled with antioxidant rich foods to help avoid free radical damage.

What is Free Radical Damage?

Our bodies are able to handle some free radicals, since they are produced in our bodies on a daily basis. When production becomes excessive or antioxidants are not available to counteract them, cellular damage can occur. Free radicals are a large cause of aging and declined health and are a contributing factor to many diseases, including: arthritis, cancer, Alzheimer's and, you guessed it, heart disease.

How Antioxidants Help

Antioxidants help repair and prevent free radical damage. They are naturally produced in our bodies and can also be found in certain foods. As we age, our natural antioxidant production declines, so adding antioxidant rich foods to our diets is important to keep us aging gracefully. There are many kinds of antioxidants and can be found in a variety of foods, including:

Tomatoes – Lycopene is a powerful antioxidant that gives tomatoes their red color. Research has shown that cooking tomatoes increases lycopene content, which makes them more beneficial. Think soups, stews, spaghetti sauce and more – yum!

Tart cherries – They provide vitamin C, fiber and potassium, helping keep your cholesterol and blood pressure in check. Anthocyanins are the antioxidants that give cherries their bright red color. Research has shown that, along with heart-health benefits, anthocyanins help to reduce muscle and joint pain after exercise with their anti-inflammatory benefits.

Red bell peppers – Like tomatoes, lycopene is the antioxidant that gives the peppers their red color. Red bell peppers are low in calories and a great source of potassium and soluble fiber. These characteristics can help with keeping weight in check and keeping blood pressure and cholesterol low.

Improving Heart Health

If you have a cardiac/cardiopulmonary condition, talk to your doctor about your treatment plan and ask if Physical or Occupational therapy can help. Cardiac Rehabilitation programs are designed to help you control your symptoms and resume an active and productive life within the limits of your condition.

American Heart Month is recognized in February to bring awareness to living a healthier lifestyle to prolong the health of your heart. National Wear Red Day is held on the first Friday in February (February 3, 2017), so individuals can show their support for the awareness of heart disease.

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