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a14. What are Antioxidants?
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I will try to keep this simple, short and free of too much biochemistry. Antioxidants are nutrients that help protect our bodies fighting oxidation of our tissues. We produce some antioxidants in our bodies naturally but, we need to eat more every day.

Foods, pollutants, drugs and other chemicals can produce electrically charged molecules. These charged molecules are called 'Radicals'. If they are floating freely in the body then they are called 'Free Radicals'.

The problem with Free Radicals is they always want to balance their charges. They do this by stealing, (or giving up) an electron or two until they are electrically balanced. This is called oxidation. If they steal an electron from an important place in our body then they can damage that place because that place is changed after the electron has gone missing. Often one molecule steals from another then gets an electron 'stolen' from itself in a cascading kind of situation.

This oxidation process can be very bad. Having that happen millions of times over and over every day can eventually cause some serious harm. It is like the rusting of steel.

What Antioxidants do is give up the electron themselves thus, preventing the body from being damaged. We need many antioxidants to do a good job. Hence the recommendation to eat lots of fruits and vegetables every day. The colourings, often in the peelings, are filled with antioxidants.

So eat up.

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