

[Print this Page](#)[Close Window](#)**Boost your antioxidant levels to live longer: Study**

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Since times immemorial, man has sought to delay the inevitable process of aging. University of Washington scientists have added a new twist to this quest for immortality. The researchers say that boosting the body's levels of natural antioxidants could be the key to a long life.

What are these antioxidants? Oxygen, the life giving gas produces elements called as free radicals in the body as a result of its interactions with various substances. These free radicals are very harmful to the body and cause heart damage, cancer, cataracts, and leave behind a weak immune system.

Antioxidants are substances that neutralize these free radicals by binding to them and rendering them harmless. Some of the best-known antioxidants are Vitamin C, Vitamin E, the Carotenoids, and Selenium. Antioxidants are also found in abundance in vegetables like spinach, carrots, red bell peppers and tomatoes.

In this present study conducted at UW, Dr Peter Rabinovitch and colleagues genetically modified mice and made them produce high levels of an antioxidant enzyme, catalase. Catalase is an enzyme that acts as an antioxidant by removing hydrogen peroxide, which is a potent source of free radicals. The study found that these mice lived 20 percent longer and had significantly less age related problems.

Dr Rabinovitch says, "People used to only focus on specific age-related diseases, because it was believed that the ageing process itself could not be affected. What we're realizing now is that by intervening in the underlying ageing process, we may be able to produce very significant increases in health span, or healthy lifespan," He added that this discovery could alter the way drugs are formulated by making them more focused on the removal of free radicals from the body.

The study was funded by the National Institute on Aging and also included researchers from the University of California, Irvine, and the University of Texas Health Sciences Center at San Antonio.

Pathologist Richard Miller, of the University of Michigan Geriatrics Center, says, "It's a pretty strong case that several different aspects of aging, including terminal disease, have been delayed or decelerated. The only way to increase maximum life span to a major extent is by fiddling around with the aging process itself."

But do not rush to your nearest pharmacy just yet, researchers caution that the are yet to find ways to package the goodness of antioxidants found in fruits and vegetables in a pill form. So until they do that why don't you just go to the supermarket and get yourself fresh tomatoes instead?

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