

New Super-Nutrient Fights Aging

Astaxanthin, a powerful, natural antioxidant that gives the reddish color to salmon, is a new nutritional superstar. According to experts, this amazing supplement, which is in the carotenoid family, is thousands of times more powerful at scavenging free radicals than vitamin C and may be a major key to preventing the degenerative diseases of aging.

“One of the major ways our body ages is through oxidative stress, and astaxanthin is one of the most potent natural antioxidants available to help prevent this degenerative damage,” Joseph Mercola, M.D., author of the *New York Times* best-seller *The No-Grain Diet*, told Newsmax Health.

“Astaxanthin is hundreds of times more effective than vitamin E in squelching singlet oxygen free radicals and far exceeds the free-radical scavenging power of vitamin C, CoQ10, beta-carotene, and green tea,” says Dr. Mercola, director of the Optimal Wellness Center.

“It’s 6,000 times stronger than vitamin C, 500 times stronger than vitamin E, and 3,000 times stronger than resveratrol and quercetin.”

Studies have shown astaxanthin (pronounced *asta-zan-thin*):

Fights dementia. A study published in the *British Journal of Nutrition* found that astaxanthin reduces harmful free radicals in the blood by 50 percent. “We have found that there is an abnormal accumulation of hydroperoxides within red blood cells in people who have dementia and Alzheimer’s,” says Dr. Mercola. “We now know that if you give these patients astaxanthin, the amount of peroxides—harmful free radicals—is reduced by 50 percent. That’s a significant reduction.”

Reduces arthritis pain. When arthritis patients were given 4 mg of astaxanthin, they reported an 85 percent improvement in their pain and a 60 percent improvement in mobility. And 60 percent said the supplement was just as effective as prescription drugs.

Lowers cholesterol. People with high cholesterol levels were given 6, 12 or 18 mg doses of astaxanthin daily. At the end of 12 weeks, astaxanthin significantly decreased triglycerides and increased HDL (good) cholesterol, although total cholesterol levels were unchanged. The study, published in the journal *Atherosclerosis*, found the greatest increases in HDL cholesterol in the groups taking 6 and 12 mg.

Shields diabetics. A study published in the *Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry* found that astaxanthin protects cells against damage caused by high sugar levels, reducing the risk of kidney disease, neuropathy and diabetic retinopathy.

Prevents heart disease. A report in *Future Cardiology* analyzed eight clinical trials and found that astaxanthin fights oxidative stress and inflammation—two main components in the development of heart disease. And a study published in *Nutrition and Metabolism* found that astaxanthin reduced levels of C-reactive protein, a biomarker of inflammation.

Other studies have shown that astaxanthin smoothes wrinkles, safeguards eyes, increases endurance and strength, boosts fat loss and improves male fertility.

Dr. Mercola believes astaxanthin is safe and effective and advises his patients to add it to their health regimen. A good food source of astaxanthin is Pacific salmon. Astaxanthin is widely available from websites, health food and drugstores.

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