



Antioxidants

Antioxidants are substances that protect the body from damage caused by “free radicals”. Free radicals are molecules that have unpaired electrons. The missing electron makes them unstable. They fix this problem by “stealing” an electron from other molecules.

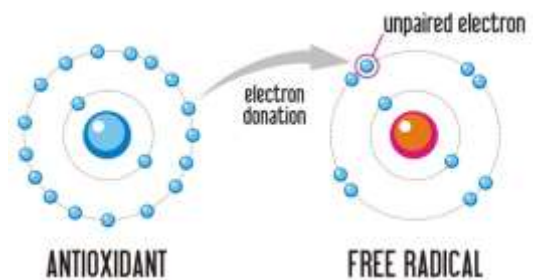
This leads to damage in cells. The cell damage leads to disease. Many aging problems are now considered to be caused, at least in part, by free radical damage.

Free Radicals

Normal cell processes produce free radicals. When cells produce energy, some free radicals are a side product. Free radicals are also the result of inflammation as well as heavy metals in the body. Exposure to environmental contaminants (like cigarette smoke), chemicals, pesticides, radiation (from sunlight or x-rays) and even certain types of foods can produce free radicals. It is impossible to avoid them.

What to Do

Since we can't avoid free radicals, the next best thing is to minimize their damage. That's where antioxidants come in. They neutralize the electrical charge on the free radicals and prevent them from causing damage.

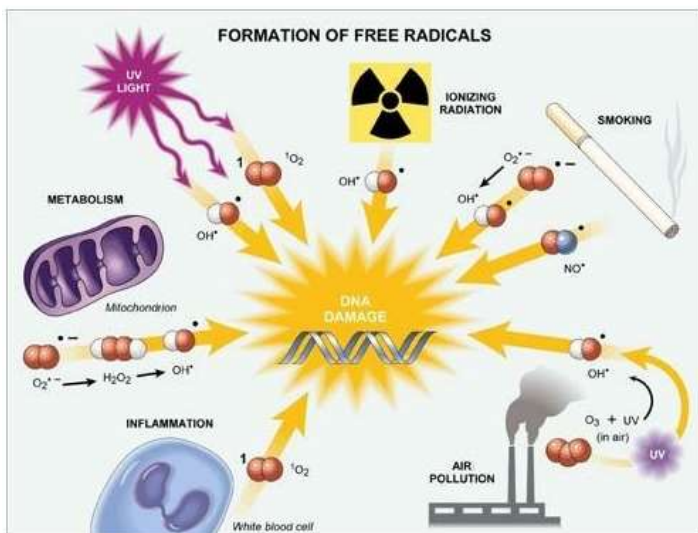


Antioxidants include some vitamins and minerals in addition to other substances. Vitamin C, vitamin E, beta-carotene, selenium, zinc, alpha-lipoic acid and coenzyme Q-10 are all examples of antioxidants. Our pets take in antioxidants naturally from their food. In young, healthy pets, they may eat enough antioxidants to keep up with the amount of free radicals.

Since the body uses up antioxidants, our pets need a constant supply. However, as our pets age, or if they become ill, free radical damage increases. The antioxidants from food often aren't enough to keep up. Supplements will be needed.

Benefits

Antioxidants benefit several disease conditions as well as the aging process. One of the more important benefits is an improved immune system. Studies have shown that puppies and kittens have a better immune response to vaccinations with additional antioxidants.



Senior pets tend to have a decrease in their immune system, as they get older. Antioxidants can help to reverse this.



Older pets often have more energy and are more playful after starting on antioxidants. Antioxidants can help prevent cancer as well as slow down its progression.

The antioxidant, coenzyme Q-10, is beneficial for heart disease. It helps the cells make energy. The heart uses up a lot of energy because it is pumping constantly. Antioxidants can also improve signs of cognitive dysfunction (Alzheimer-like signs).

Having enough antioxidants is necessary for good health, especially in older pets. A supplement with several different kinds of antioxidants is probably best. The antioxidants all have slightly different benefits.

It's best to start pets at an early age. This can prevent degenerative problems from starting in the first place. It's easier to prevent disease than to control it. However, supplements at any age will still help.

Summary

Nothing will help your pet more than a robust immune system. Antioxidants are a vital key to achieving that. Almost every pet needs supplements. Diets often aren't sufficient and our pets are exposed to so many things that produce free radicals. Antioxidants are cheap insurance to help your pets live a long, healthy life.

