

10 Anti-Nutrients to Ditch

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Remember, we aren't telling you to simply cut out all of these foods all of the time. Just because a food is listed as containing an anti-nutrient doesn't mean you need to throw it in the trash sack immediately. You may be able to include it in moderation or replace it with a version that follows the proper preparation guidelines.

You see, there are naturally occurring EMDs in some of the "healthiest," most micronutrient-rich foods. Foods like kale, chia seeds, nuts, sweet potatoes, and berries all contain EMDs. Some EMDs can be reduced by proper preparation methods, making the foods safer to consume while allowing you to enjoy them and their micronutrient benefits, as well. Let's take a closer look at the EMDs found in our foods and drinks.

Sugar and High-Fructose Corn Syrup (HFCS)

Nutrients They Deplete: C, calcium, chromium, copper, magnesium, zinc

Where They're Found: Almost all prepackaged goods in the grocery store under [various names](#)

Solution: [Give up sugar.](#)

More: [How Sugar Could Be Stealing Your Nutrients](#)

Phytates (Phytic Acid)

Nutrients They Deplete: B3, D, calcium, chromium, copper, iron, magnesium, manganese, zinc

Where They're Found: Any [wheat](#) product, corn, beans, seeds (including flaxseed and chia seeds), nuts, grains (cereals), brown rice, soy products, oats, figs, artichokes, carrots, potatoes, broccoli, strawberries, rice, apples

Solution: Reduce phytates by sprouting, soaking, or fermenting grains, beans, seeds, and nuts.

Oxalates (Oxalic Acid)

Nutrients They Deplete: Calcium, iron, magnesium; Oxalates' ability to bind with calcium sends 1 out of every 1,000 Americans to the hospital annually with kidney stones.

Where They're Found: Spinach, wheat, buckwheat, peanut butter, beets, beet greens, Swiss chard, nuts, rhubarb, beans (green, waxed, or dried), collard greens, sweet potatoes, quinoa, celery, green rutabagas, soy products, white potatoes, okra, tomatoes, sesame seeds (tahini), carrots

Solution: Cook oxalate-rich vegetables.

More: [Man's Iced Tea Habit Linked to Kidney Failure](#)

Lectins

Nutrients They Deplete: Lectins are a plant's most powerful weapon. Lectins are sticky proteins that coat your intestinal tract, making it difficult to properly absorb all micronutrients. Lectins also aid in the creation of [leaky gut](#) by binding to your intestinal walls and acting like chisels, forcing apart the cells that protect the rest of you from the undigested foods inside.

Where They're Found: Rice, wheat, spelt, rye, barley, soy products, other beans, seeds, nuts, corn, potatoes, tomatoes, eggplant, hot and bell peppers

Solution: Reduce lectin levels by soaking, sprouting, and fermenting; cooking also reduces levels, but none of these will totally eliminate lectins. (Pressure cooking is the best.)

Trypsin Inhibitors

Nutrients They Deplete: Fat-soluble vitamins A, D, E, and K, amino acids (carnitine); digesting too many of these trypsin inhibitors stresses the pancreas and can lead to pancreatitis and even pancreatic cancer

Where They're Found: Soy products, other beans, grains, nuts, seeds, vegetables of the nightshade family (potatoes, tomatoes, and eggplant)

Solution: Cooking deactivates most of them.

Phosphoric Acid

Nutrients It Depletes: Calcium, iron, magnesium, manganese

Where It's Found: [Carbonated sodas](#), carbonated energy drinks, some flavored waters

Solution: Omit completely.

Alcohol

Nutrients It Depletes: A, B1, B2, B3, B5, B6, B7, B9, B12, C, calcium, chromium, magnesium, phosphorus, potassium, selenium, zinc, omega-3, omega-6

Where It's Found: Beer, wine, hard alcohol

Solution: Limit to two drinks a day to reduce depletion while gaining [health benefits](#)

Caffeine

Nutrients It Depletes: A, B9, D, calcium

Where It's Found: Coffee, tea, soda, energy drinks, and chocolate

Solution: Limit to 2 cups a day and replenish calcium. The micronutrient benefits of caffeine-laden beverages may far outweigh the minor depletion. Coffee, for example, is the number-one source of antioxidants in the US diet, containing 300 percent more free radical-fighting antioxidants than even black tea.

More: [9 Incredible Benefits of Coffee](#)

Tannins

Nutrients They Deplete: B1, B9, calcium, iron, magnesium, zinc

Where They're Found: Coffee, tea, red wine, fruit juice, rhubarb, beans (red), lentils, barley (beer), nuts, spices, chocolate, pomegranates, berries, apples, and grape

Solution: If at risk for [iron deficiency](#), avoid consuming tannin-containing beverages at mealtimes.

BPA and Phthalates

Nutrients They Deplete: Calcium

Where They're Found: Plastic and Styrofoam food containers, water bottles, canned foods, receipts, many children's toys, PVC pipes

Solution: Avoid whenever possible.

More: [Plastic-Free Food Storage Solutions](#)

MSG

Nutrients It Depletes: Vitamins C and E, chromium, magnesium, selenium, zinc; MSG has been shown to make us leptin resistant—leptin is the hormone that makes you feel full—and causes the secretion of insulin, your fat-storage hormone, which drops your blood sugar and makes you hungrier faster.

Where It's Found: Almost all prepackaged goods in the grocery store under various names.

Solution: Do not consume.

Adapted from [The Micronutrient Miracle](#)