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# Antioxidants:

## *Seeing Doctors' Approval*

The “Dr. Oz effect” is giving the antioxidant market an extra push sending consumers to their local retailers—sometimes in droves. *By Shari Barbanel*

**T**he list of health benefits of antioxidants seems to grow longer every day. And while the typical American diet lacks the important fruits and vegetables that bear antioxidants, consumers are realizing how important they are, and are adding antioxidant supplements into their diets. The pay-off, according to Euromonitor, is that

the global antioxidant supplement market is estimated to be worth approximately \$9.18 billion. “Consumers know that our dietary habits are probably on the top of the list of causes for many of the diseases we face today,” said J.L. Paes-Leme, founder and CEO of NaturaNectar LLC (Sunrise, FL), highlighting heart disease, cancer, diabetes, osteoporosis

and gastrointestinal disorders. “Diets rich in antioxidants supported by the right supplements are helping people live healthier lives.”

### **The Dr. Oz Effect**

Retailers agree the influence of Dr. Oz, who has been a strong advocate of antioxidants and features the “Ultimate Antioxidant Checklist” on his



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television show and website, can't be underestimated.

"Our customer base always shows interest if a TV or radio doctor/personality has spoken about the benefits of

certain antioxidants," said Rachael Peterson, manager of Bridgeport Herbs and Vitamins (Chicago, IL).

Kris Berg, general manager of Cambridge Naturals (Cambridge, MA) has also experienced the "Dr. Oz effect" first-hand. When customers flock to the store requesting a certain product, it can leave the staff a bit frustrated, Berg said, adding that she wishes someone could give retailers notice so they could be prepared for the rush with enough products in stock and have information for their customers readily available.

## Superfruit Superstars

Sea Buckthorn has been gaining popularity as a new superfruit no doubt due



to receiving Dr. Oz's seal of approval when he mentioned it on television multiple times as an alternative treatment for the skin as well as gum/oral health. An orange berry that has been used medicinally in Asia and Europe for hundreds of years, it is primarily grown in shady areas in colder climates such as China, Russia and Canada.

"Although sea buckthorn has many health benefits, more people these days know sea buckthorn for its skincare benefits," said James Liu, general manager of

SeabuckWonders, a division of Health King Enterprises & Balanceuticals Group, Inc. (Chicago, IL).

SeabuckWonders offers a line of products in soft gels as well as dropper

# The Medicine Hunter's Antioxidant Trends



*Chris Kilham, Medicine Hunter, is an author, educator, ethnobotanist and founder of Medicine*

*Hunter Inc. He has conducted clinical research in more than 20 countries and has appeared on many television programs such as The Dr. Oz Show and is a regular on FOX News Health. Here, Kilham shares some of the latest trends in antioxidants.*

**1. The race for ultimate superfruit continues.** So what is the superfruit du jour? Goji? Mangosteen? Açai? Pomegranate? Maqui berry? Durian? Purveyors of each superfruit will continue to shout above each other with claims of superior antioxidant activity, remarkable biological benefits and miracle cures. Let's not forget weight loss claims either. We will see it all. The truth is, all of the purported superfruits are highly beneficial to health. They all contain ben-

eficial compounds that protect the body, and they are unquestionably good for overall vitality. But especially in the U.S., we need a heavy-weight champ. This is wrong thinking. Consuming all of the antioxidant superfruits over time will provide broad health benefits.

**2. Cocoa emerges a titan.** Cocoa, which derives from cacao pods, has emerged as pretty much the definitive superfood or superfruit, and an apparent lifesaver on top of it. With 712 known compounds, a vast number of



which are highly protective with a very strong flavanol value, cocoa has emerged not only as the essential building block of chocolate, but as a potent medicine that has been right under our noses, so to speak. Harvard

medical researchers, under the direction of Dr. Norman Hollenberg, have extensively investigated correlation of very high consumption of cocoa among Panama's Kuna people, who enjoy extremely low cardiovascular disease. His publications make a direct link between cocoa intake and greatly reduced risk of the primary killer disease among adults.

**3. ORAC or other functions?** Not only do we know what antioxidants are, we also know that some are stronger than others. Thanks to oxygen radical absorbance capacity (ORAC) evaluation, we can determine whether one antioxidant has greater protective activity than another. So

ORAC is all the buzz, but beyond antioxidant capacity, these compounds also possess other extraordinary benefits to health. Flavanols in cocoa can reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease. Green tea polyphenols show potent

anti-cancer activity. Lycopene from tomatoes is beneficial for prostate health. Quercetin (from eating onions) is so amazing, it's hard to know where to start. Translation—our knowledge of what these compounds do is expanding. This is all good.

**4. Antioxidant science takes great leaps.** We will continue to discover unique properties of major categories of antioxidant agents in plants. Especially in medicinal plants, we will learn more about novel groups of antioxidant agents like the rosavins in rhodiola, the schizandrins in schisandra berry, the anthocyanins in purple berries, the ginsenosides in ginseng, and on and on. We are already learning wondrous things.

**5. Broad antioxidant intake proves most beneficial.** It will come as no surprise to me when conclusive evidence settles the matter on broad consumption of many different antioxidant groups and compounds is the healthiest possible dietary and preventive strategy. All the road signs are pointing in that direction.



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bottles for topical use. The company's best sellers include SeabuckWonders berry oil in dropper bottle and SeabuckWonders berry oil soft gels. Additionally, SeabuckWonders' Himalayan sea buckthorn is the only certified organic sea buckthorn on the market today, according to the company. Peterson said that the line is a top seller at Bridgeport Herbs and Vitamins.

Although the Dr. Oz's of the world may inspire consumers to head to the store, there can often be confusion

once they get there. "People are aware there is an intrinsic value in antioxidants, but they have difficulty understanding how and what makes a good antioxidant," admitted Sarah Quadri, head of research and development for NeoCell (Santa Ana, CA). "They may know the name of the latest 'superfruit,' but won't necessarily know why this one is better than the previous one. In many cases, unfortunately, there really isn't a difference and it's all marketing and hype. This is not to say an ingredient isn't good, but it might not necessarily be better than the previous hot ingredient."

With the hot new exotic superfruit always around the corner, some consumers have decided to play it safe and stick to more well-known fruits that are also "super."

Tart cherries are a powerful antioxidant, and studies have shown that they can reduce pain and inflammation, reduce the risk of heart disease,



and help regulate and promote restful sleep (Dr. Oz has also advocated the health benefits of tart cherries). "Tart cherries are one of the little known foods to contain melatonin—a 'superfruit' powerhouse," explained Michelle White, founder of Michelle's Miracle® (Leland, MI). "Segments within this market include the Boomer generation seeking drug-free health remedies for joint pain and sleep disruption,



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and sports enthusiasts/runners who benefit with consumption of tart cherries for muscle recovery.”

Michelle’s Miracle offers a range of products of tart cherry juice concentrate in liquid form including the original cherry concentrate, a joint formula, and a sleep formula. In addition, the company introduced Cherrimax, a convenient tablet form, to the line. According to White, the most powerful delivery method is in its purist form—concentrate—“because 100 percent concen-



trate is the most active, with no unnecessary additives.”

### The Convenience Factor

Antioxidants may have made headlines for their anti-aging properties, but antioxidants can be helpful for all age groups, not just Baby Boomers. Making sure that children and young adults are

incorporating antioxidant-rich foods and supplements in their regimen can only help them in the future. “Parents are realizing the long-term benefits of exposing younger generations to antioxidants and how they can provide benefits in the future as their bodies age,” said Quadri. “Aging and deterioration in our bodies are very closely

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connected to oxidation and deterioration on the cellular level. Older generations are seeing that long-term use is the best way and are trying to share this with younger generations."

Appealing to the person always on the go, delivery methods such as chews are an easy alternative to liquids and tablets. "Consumers' expectations have increased," explained Siti Ibrahim, director of sales, marketing and business development for Biotropics (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia) "They have a higher demand not just for convenience, but also for natural, low-calorie supplements that deliver on their promise." Biotropics recently introduced Super Antioxidant Chews, which are a proprietary blend of seven tropical fruits including mangosteen parapat extract, and every chew has the antioxidant power of 2.5 cups of blueberries.

Another trend in the antioxidant market is combining antioxidants with another ingredient so they can compliment each other and possibly allow the consumer to take one supplement that can do the job of two. NeoCell began focusing on antioxidants to enhance their collagen products. "We see antioxidants as a complementary product for our core collagen products, so they aren't our primary focus," explained Quadri. However, NeoCell has introduced a number of products that include antioxidants such as Pomegranate from the Seed. The veggie capsules can protect and improve cardio health, relieve menopausal symptoms and also contains anti-aging properties. Hyaluronic Acid Blueberry Liquid aids in joint lubrication, eye health and skin viscoelasticity.

Additionally, the company has introduced Resveratrol Antioxidant, which is a blend of trans-resveratrol from organic Muscadine grapes and vine from the South of France, in both liquid and

*Another trend in the antioxidant market is combining antioxidants with another ingredient so they can compliment each other and possibly allow the consumer to take one supplement that can do the job of two.*

caplet forms. Studies show that resveratrol has anti-aging and anti-inflammatory properties.

EaseFemin™ is NaturaNectar's menopausal support product designed to help relieve women of menopausal symptoms. Two of the main ingredients in the formula are rich in antioxidants—isoflavones from fermented non-genetically engineered soy and IsoFactor™, isoflavones and flavonoids of Brazilian red bee propolis. "Menopausal women are also very concerned about the effects of aging on their bodies and on their sexual system," said Paes-Leme. "This is a product that addresses both issues: great menopausal support with antioxidants. Now you are talking about synergies of end results. This is something that will catch consumers' attention."

## Preparation

The best thing that manufacturers can do for their retailers is to give them as much information as possible. "Because of confusion surrounding antioxidants, we are focusing 2011 on face-to-face education through demo reps and store staff educators with 'leave-behinds' so store staff can be more useful partners in the process of helping their customers find the best product to meet their needs," said Quadri. Holding seminars for customers and having a designated education station in the store are also great tools for retailers to pass the knowledge that they learn at their training sessions to their customers.



Unfortunately, at this point there does not seem to be a way to prepare retailers for the effect Dr. Oz has on his viewers. "In a perfect world, it would be great if we could be one step ahead of the TV doctors, knowing what they will be speaking about," said Peterson. "If this were possible, we could then answer questions immediately rather than having to look up items as the customers are asking questions." **VR**

## Extra! Extra!

Visit [www.vitaminretailer.com](http://www.vitaminretailer.com) to read about a clinical study showing antioxidants' positive effect on alcohol-induced liver disease.

## **i** For More Information:

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