



Believe it or not, your body likely fends off at least 10,000 attacks from free radicals every single day! Free radicals, which are unbalanced molecules that can disrupt healthy cells and cause a chain reaction of destruction, can lead to a wide variety of health problems, and should therefore be something you're thinking about when considering your overall health and wellbeing. A cleanse or [detox](#) is a great way to combat free radicals and fight off potentially serious health problems.

### Where Free Radicals Come From

Free radicals can come from both internal and external sources. For instance, they can develop in your own body through the course of natural processes that take place there. In particular, when oxygen reacts with compounds during the energy-making process in your body, free radicals can form.

They can also come from external sources as well. When you're exposed to things like UV radiation and radon, for instance, free radicals can form in your body. Likewise when you consume or come in contact with pollutants and other toxins, like agricultural chemicals (pesticides and herbicides), additives put into your foods, or environmental toxins.

### How Free Radicals Damage Your Body

Free radicals are unstable molecules that can react quickly with other compounds in your body—usually the nearest stable molecule they come in contact with—turning that cell into a free radical as well. This sets in motion a chain reaction as one free radical turns another healthy cell into yet another free radical, and on and on. This cascade reaction can result in the total disruption of a living cell or a whole group of cells.

## Understanding Free Radicals and Physical Wellbeing

Written by Administrator

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But you don't have to take free radicals sitting down. Your body uses compounds, called antioxidants, to protect itself from the damage free radicals can cause. [Antioxidants](#) work by neutralizing the [free radicals](#)

and putting a stop to the chain reaction. Under normal circumstances, when there are enough antioxidants present, your body can use its own immune system to fight off the damage that can occur because of free radicals.

However, there are two situations when free radical damage can get out of control:

- There are no antioxidants available for your body to use to neutralize the free radicals.
- Free radical production gets out of control and becomes excessive.

The importance of antioxidants in your diet can not be stressed enough, especially when you're going through a detox or a cleanse. Every day, you should ensure that you're taking in enough antioxidant-rich foods to ward off the potentially devastating damage that free radicals can do to your body.

When your diet lacks the antioxidants you need, you're exposed to excessively-high doses of free radicals from your environment, or when you want to add an extra dose of support to your [detox experience](#), an antioxidant supplement may be recommended by your [health care practitioner](#). Don't let free radicals sneak up on you!