

# All About Antinutrients

PULSES



## What are antinutrients?

Antinutrients are common, naturally occurring compounds that are often found in plant-based foods. They are thought to give certain plant foods their disease-fighting powers.

## Should I be worried about them?

No. Certain antinutrients can reduce or prevent the utilization of certain nutrients by binding with them during digestion, but almost all are inactivated with processing (by soaking, sprouting, fermenting, extruding, or simply cooking), and primarily found in foods that you would not consume raw.

## Do pulses contain antinutrients?

Yes, pulses contain various antinutrients, including phytates, lectins and lignans. However, harmful antinutrient properties are significantly reduced or inactivated with cooking, so they are rarely an issue since pulses are almost exclusively consumed in their cooked or processed form. Pulses have been a nutritious staple in diets across the globe for centuries.

## Can antinutrients be good for me?

Yes! In fact, some of the most well-known antinutrients are phytonutrients, the health-boosting compounds that are celebrated in plant-based foods. Some antinutrients function as antioxidants, which help protect the body from free radicals.

### Sources

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/19774556>  
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S096399699390069U>  
<https://lpi.oregonstate.edu/mic/dietary-factors/phytochemicals/lignans>  
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/9759559>

## COMMON ANTINUTRIENTS AND THEIR BENEFITS

**Phytates:** Commonly found in grains, nuts, seeds and pulses. While phytates can bind to iron and zinc, they also have anti-inflammatory effects, may prevent certain types of cancer and cardiovascular disease and may help lower a food's glycemic load.

**Lectins:** Lectins are plant proteins commonly found in grains and pulses, but are mostly inactivated with cooking. Remaining lectins bind to carbohydrates, which can actually help reduce a food's glycemic load and stabilize blood sugar.

**Lignans:** Lignans are found in whole grains, nuts, seeds, pulses and other vegetables, and include beneficial polyphenols. Lignans are associated with hormone and immune system support, cardiovascular health and prostate, colon and uterine health.

**Tannins:** Found in various wines, teas and chocolate, tannins are associated with lowered blood pressure and blood sugar balance.



[www.pulses.org](http://www.pulses.org)