

## What Is Resveratrol?

Resveratrol is a *phytoalexin*. If you don't have a chemistry or medical degree, or that term prompts a response of "a phyto – what?", don't panic! We'll keep the rest of this post in layman's terms.

In nature, when plants are attacked by insects, bacteria, a fungus, or even extreme temperatures, they turn to natural defense mechanisms to protect themselves. One of those mechanisms is an antibiotic called a phytoalexin. We would also classify them as Antioxidants (a term you may be more familiar with) that help to slow or prevent the oxidation of cells (which means that the cells become stressed or damaged and eventually die). The visible ageing process in your body is really the process of extended cell death in your skin cells.

Resveratrol has been around since the late 1930's when it was first identified and named by a Japanese scientist named Takaoka, but it's only in the last 20 years or so that it's potent effects as both a supplement and a topical application have been more widely publicized.

Most of the research has been done, unfortunately, on lab animals (usually rats), which means that the human studies are still ongoing and may be several years away from publication. Obviously when you are researching extended medical benefits from a supplement, you have to allow the time for the supplements to be taken over an extended period of time (often a decade or more) with a large patient population (tens of thousands of people) to produce results that will stand up to academic and professional scrutiny.

What is really drawing public attention is the identified sources of resveratrol. Products like cocoa powder, dark chocolate, and baking chocolate have been found to provide low levels of resveratrol, with higher levels found in sprouted peanuts and Japanese Knotweed. However, the most popular source has been red wine – a great excuse for a daily glass or two (for medicinal purposes!).

Unfortunately, regular consumption of red wine can have its side effects, so your best option is a quality resveratrol supplement that offers 20mg per day or more. Red wine typically offers 1.98-7.12mg per Liter by comparison.