



## BETA-CAROTENE

(See also [Vitamin A](#))

$\beta$ -carotene (or provitamin A) is an orange- pigmented terpene. It has beneficial effects in the fight against free radicals. Contrary to vitamin A,  $\beta$ -carotene can not be stored in the liver and  $\beta$ -carotene excess is not toxic. During digestion, one part of  $\beta$ -carotene is absorbed as- is and the other part is transformed into retinol (vitamin A) by the intestinal cells.

$\beta$  carotene is found in certain fruits and vegetables: green pepper, carrots, spinach, lettuce, tomatoes, sweet potatoes, broccoli, cantaloupes, squash and apricots. In general, the deeper the colour of a fruit or vegetable (or its leaf), the more  $\beta$  carotene it contains.

$\beta$  carotene is naturally found in the grass that is consumed by cows. Once consumed,  $\beta$  carotene is transformed into vitamin A, which goes straight into the cows' milk. The "creamy" colour which is usually found in milk, cream and butter is due to the presence of this vitamin.