

Fast Facts on Blueberries

Chorage C. A. and Kamble S. R

Ph.D Scholar, Department of Food Process Engineering, Vaugh Institute of Agricultural Engineering & Technology, SHUATS Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh

SUMMARY

Fresh blueberries are a popular summer treat. They have a sweet flavor, and they are succulent and nutritious. Blueberries can be eaten freshly picked or incorporated into a variety of recipes. They can also be purchased frozen. They have been shown to protect against heart disease and cancer, and can also help maintain bone strength, mental health, and healthful blood pressure.

INTRODUCTION

Blueberries are a nutritious, delicious berry that can be used in a variety of meals. A type of flavonoid called anthocyanin gives blueberries many of their health benefits. Flavonoids are plant compounds that often have a powerful antioxidant effect. Anthocyanin is responsible for the blueberry's characteristic blue color. It also contributes to the numerous advantages of blueberries. Consuming a variety of fruits and vegetables has long been associated with a reduced risk of many lifestyle-related health conditions. Many studies have suggested that increasing consumption of plant foods such as blueberries decreases the risk of obesity, diabetes, heart disease, and overall mortality. Plant foods may also promote hair and skin health, increased energy, and overall lower weight. Freezing blueberries is often discussed by experts. It is often said that the freezing process can diminish the potency of the blueberry's health benefits. One study showed that over the course of 6 months in storage, the anthocyanin degraded by 59 percent. However, this is not confirmed, and different sources take different stances on whether freezing blueberries reduces their impact on health. When in doubt, buy fresh, organic blueberries. Although more research is needed, blueberries are strongly linked to various different elements of healthful living.



Benefits of Blueberries

1) Maintaining healthy bones: Blueberries contain iron, phosphorous, calcium, magnesium, manganese, zinc, and vitamin K. Each of these is a component of bone. Adequate intake of these minerals and vitamins contributes to building and maintaining bone structure and strength.

2) Skin health: Collagen is the support system of the skin. It relies on vitamin C as an essential nutrient, and works to help prevent skin damage caused by the sun, pollution, and smoke. Vitamin C may also improve collagen's ability to smooth wrinkles and enhance overall skin texture.

3) Lowering blood pressure: Maintaining low sodium levels is essential to keeping blood pressure at a healthful level. Blueberries are free of sodium. They contain potassium, calcium, and magnesium. Some studies have shown that diets low in these minerals are associated with higher blood pressure. Adequate dietary intake of these minerals is thought to help reduce blood pressure.

4) Managing diabetes: Studies have found that people with type 1 diabetes who consume high-fiber diets have low blood glucose levels, and people with type 2 diabetes who consume the same may have improved blood sugar, lipid, and insulin levels. One cup of blueberries contributes 3.6 grams (g) of fiber. Over the course of the study, 6.5 percent of the participants developed diabetes.

5) Protecting against heart disease: The fiber, potassium, folate, vitamin C, vitamin B6, and phyto nutrient content in blueberries supports heart health. The absence of cholesterol from blueberries is also beneficial to the heart. Fiber content helps to reduce the total amount of cholesterol in the blood and decrease the risk of heart disease. Blueberries can help to preserve cardiovascular health.

6) Preventing cancer: Vitamin C, vitamin A, and the various phyto nutrients in blueberries function as powerful antioxidants that may help protect cells against damage from disease-linked free radicals. Research suggests that antioxidants may inhibit tumor growth, decrease inflammation in the body, and help ward off or slow down esophageal, lung, mouth, pharynx, endometrial, pancreatic, prostate, and colon cancers. Blueberries also contain folate, which plays a role in DNA synthesis and repair. This can prevent the formation of cancer cells due to mutations in the DNA.

7) Improving mental health: Population-based studies have shown that consumption of blueberries is connected to slower cognitive decline in older women.

8) Healthy digestion, weight loss, and feeling full: Blueberries help to prevent constipation and maintain regularity for a healthful digestive tract because of their fiber content. Dietary fiber is also commonly recognized as an important factor in weight loss and weight management by functioning as a "bulking agent" in the digestive system. High fiber foods increase satiety, or the feeling of being full, and reduce appetite.

REFERENCES

- Antioxidants: Beyond the hype. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/antioxidants/>
- Antioxidants: In depth. (2016, May 4). Retrieved from <https://nccih.nih.gov/health/antioxidants/introduction.htm>
- Antioxidants and cancer prevention. (2017, February 6). Retrieved from <https://www.cancer.gov/about-cancer/causes-prevention/risk/diet/antioxidants-fact-sheet>
- Antioxidants. (2018, March 1). Retrieved from <https://medlineplus.gov/antioxidants.html>