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Top 10 health benefits of Blueberries

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Blueberries are the fruits of a shrub that belong to the heath family, which includes the cranberry and bilberry as well as the azalea, mountain laurel and rhododendron. Blueberries grow in clusters and range in size from that of a small pea to a marble. They are deep in color, ranging from blue to maroon to purple-black, and feature a white-gray waxy "bloom" that covers the surface serving as a protective coat. The skin surrounds a semi-transparent flesh that encases tiny seeds. According to a study presented at the 2009 Experimental Biology conference, a diet rich in blueberries lowers blood cholesterol levels while improving glucose control and insulin sensitivity, lowering the risk of subsequent heart disease and diabetes.

Not only are blueberries yummy, they have some fantastic health benefits which include:

- 1. The highest antioxidant capacity of all fresh fruit:** Blue Berries, being very rich in anti oxidants like Anthocyanin, vitamin C, B complex, vitamin E, vitamin A, copper (a very effective immune builder and anti-bacterial), selenium, zinc, iron (promotes immunity by raising haemoglobin and oxygen concentration in blood) etc. boost up your immune system and prevent infections. Once your immunity is strong, you won't catch colds, fever, pox and all such nasty viral and bacterial communicable diseases.
- 2. Neutralizes free radicals which can affect disease and aging in the body:** Blue Berries bring you the brightest ray of hope, for they are laden with anti oxidants and rank number 1 in the world of anti oxidants. This is mainly due to presence of Anthocyanin, a pigment responsible for the blue color of the blue berries. The abundance of vitamin-C is also a big factor for this as well.
- 3. Aid in reducing Belly Fat:** A new University of Michigan Cardiovascular Center study suggests that blueberries may help reduce belly fat and risk factors for cardiovascular disease and metabolic syndrome. So far, we know that the fruit works on rats, which were the test subjects. A blueberry-enriched powder was mixed into the rats' diet, which was either low-fat or high-fat rat chow. After 90 days, the rats with the blueberry-enriched diet had less abdominal fat, lower triglycerides, lower cholesterol and improved fasting glucose and insulin sensitivity. And their health was even better when combined with the low-fat diet. That group had lower body weight, lower total fat mass and reduced liver mass than the rats on the high-fat diet. An enlarged liver is linked to obesity and insulin resistance, a hallmark of diabetes. Although more research is needed to confirm these results in humans, a related study presented at the same conference showed that men with risk factors for heart disease who drank wild blueberry juice for three weeks seemed to experience slight improvements in glucose and insulin control.

4. Helps promote urinary tract health: The building of colonies of certain bacteria like b-coli along the lining of the inner walls of urinary tract is responsible for this infection, resulting in inflammation, burning sensation during in passage of urine and other complications. Here, Blue Berries can be surprisingly beneficial. It has a compound formed of big polymer like heavy molecules which inhibits the growth of such bacteria. It also has some anti biotic properties which adds to this effect. These heavy and big molecules almost wash-off these bacteria along the tract, thereby preventing the infection. vitamin E and vitamin A, selenium, zinc and phosphorus, which are very beneficial and essential for the ocular health. Data reported in a study published in the *Archives of Ophthalmology* indicates that eating 3 or more servings of fruit per day may lower your risk of age-related macular degeneration (ARMD), the primary cause of vision loss in older adults, by 36%, compared to persons who consume less than 1.5 servings of fruit



daily.

5. Been proved to preserve vision: Blueberry extract, high in compounds called anthocyanosides, has been found in clinical studies to slow down visual loss. They can prevent or delay all age related ocular problems like macular degeneration, cataract, myopia, and hypermetropia, dryness and infections, particularly those pertaining to retina, due to their anti-oxidant properties. Blue Berries contain a special group of anti oxidants called Carotenoids (lutein, zeaxanthin etc.), Flavonoids (like rutin, resveritrol, quercetin etc.), in addition to others such as vitamin C, vitamin E and vitamin A, selenium, zinc and phosphorus, which are very beneficial and essential for the ocular health. Data reported in a study published in the *Archives of Ophthalmology* indicates that eating 3 or more servings of fruit per day may lower your risk of age-related macular degeneration (ARMD), the primary cause of vision loss in older adults, by 36%, compared to persons who consume less than 1.5 servings of fruit daily.

6. Brain Health: The anthocyanin, the selenium, the vitamins A, B-complex, C and E, the zinc, sodium, potassium, copper, magnesium, phosphorus, manganese etc., among others, can prevent and heal neurotic disorders by preventing degeneration and death of neurons, brain-cells and also by restoring health of the central nervous system. It is hard to believe that these berries can also cure serious problems like Alzheimer's disease to a great extent. They even heal damaged brain cells and neuron tissues and keep your memory sharp for a long-long time. Researchers found that diets rich in blueberries significantly improved both the learning capacity and motor skills of aging animals, making them mentally equivalent to much younger ones.

7. Heart Disease: The high fiber content, those brilliant anti oxidants and the ability to dissolve the 'bad cholesterol' make the Blue Berry an ideal dietary

supplement to cure many heart diseases. It also strengthens the cardiac muscles. In this study, published in the *Journal of Agriculture and Food Chemistry*, researchers found that a moderate drink (about 4 ounces) of white wine contained .47 mmol of free radical absorbing antioxidants, red wine provided 2.04 mmol, and a wine made from highbush blueberries delivered 2.42 mmol of these protective plant compounds.

8. Constipation & Digestion: While roughage (fiber) in Blue Berries keep away constipation (Of course, a single piece alone will not do. You need to eat a big handful of them), the vitamins, sodium, copper, fructose and acids improve digestion.

9. Cancer: Blue Berries can prove to be bliss for the cancer patients, for they contain certain compounds like Pterostilbene (excellent remedy for colon and liver cancer) and Ellagic Acid which, in harmony with Anthocyanin and other anti oxidants like vitamin-C and copper, can do miracles to prevent and cure cancer. Laboratory studies published in the *Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry* show that phenolic compounds in blueberries can inhibit colon cancer cell proliferation and induce apoptosis (programmed cell death). A significant 34% reduction in ovarian cancer risk was also seen in women with the highest intake of the flavone luteolin (found in citrus).

10. Other benefits & facts: They keep you fresh, active, fit, sharp, close to nature and in a good mood, as they are very good anti depressants. You also need not spend a lot on medicines, neither are there any side effects. Remember, the deeper the color of the Blue Berries, the more they are rich in anti oxidants and other medicinal values.

How to Choose?

Choose blueberries that are firm and have a lively, uniform hue colored with a whitish bloom. Shake the container, noticing whether the berries have the tendency to move freely; if they do not, this may indicate that they are soft and damaged or moldy. Avoid berries that appear dull in color or are soft and watery in texture. They should be free from moisture since the presence of water will cause the berries to decay. When purchasing frozen berries, shake the bag gently to ensure that the berries move freely and are not clumped together, which may suggest that they have been thawed and refrozen.

<http://www.womenfitness.net/blueberries.htm>

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