

# Blueberries

## "Their role in health"



### What's healthy about Blueberries?

The health benefits of blueberries are believed to be due to the diverse range of phytochemicals they contain, that act as:

- Antioxidants
- Anticancer agents
- Anti-neurodegenerative agents
- Anti-inflammatory agents

Because of these properties, many studies have been conducted to evaluate the health benefits of blueberries in chronic disease prevention.

- Blueberries are the common name for the group of flowering plants in the genus *Vaccinium*, section *Cyanococcus*.
- USDA reports that between the years of 1994 and 2003, annual U.S. consumption of fresh blueberries rose about 1.6 x's.
- This increased consumption is likely due to the health benefits associated with regular blueberry consumption. Blueberries have antioxidant compounds that may delay chronic diseases.
- Blueberries are used in jellies, jams and pies. They are baked into muffins and are an ingredient in many other snacks.

### Research

- Regular consumption of fruit and vegetables lowers the risk for developing **HEART DISEASE** due to their antioxidant properties. Blueberries have the highest concentration of antioxidants.
- A daily intake of 250 g of blueberries (about 1.5 cups) for three weeks reduced the markers of oxidative stress in chronic smokers. Blueberries were effective if they were consumed as regular part of the diet, not if taken occasionally.
- Several animal studies show that regular blueberry consumption may delay or prevent **ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE**.
- Blueberries may be beneficial in inhibiting oral, breast, colon and prostate **CANCERS**.

### What are Phytochemicals?



Phytochemicals, commonly referred to as phytonutrients, are naturally-occurring non-nutritive (not required in the diet like nutrients) constituents of fruits and vegetables. They are said to be bioactive and are considered to have a beneficial effect on human health.

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