

Toro Blueberry

Vaccinium corymbosum 'Toro'



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.

Blueberries contain a plant compound called anthocyanin. This gives blueberries both their blue color and many of their health benefits.

Blueberries can help heart health, bone strength, skin health, blood pressure, diabetes management, cancer prevention, and mental health.

One cup of blueberries provides 24 percent of a person recommended daily allowance of vitamin C.

Use blueberries to top waffles, pancakes, yogurt, oatmeal, or cereal, blend them in a smoothie or syrup, or fold them into muffins and sweet breads.

People who use blood-thinners, such as warfarin, should speak to their doctor before increasing their intake of blueberries, as the high vitamin K content can affect blood clotting.

Benefits

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^{Trusted Source} 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.

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.

Iron and zinc fulfil crucial roles^{Trusted Source} in maintaining the strength and elasticity of bones and joints.

Low intakes of vitamin K have been linked to a higher risk of bone fracture^{Trusted Source}. However, adequate vitamin K intake improves calcium absorption and may reduce calcium loss.



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.

One cup of blueberries provides 24 percent of the recommended daily allowance of vitamin C.

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 [Trusted Source](#).

However, other studies have counteracted these findings. For example, a 2015 study [Trusted Source](#) of people with metabolic syndrome found that daily blueberry consumption for 6 weeks did not affect blood pressure levels.



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.

A large 2013 cohort study^{Trusted Source} published in the BMJ suggested that certain fruits may reduce the risk of type 2 diabetes in adults.

Over the course of the study, 6.5 percent of the participants developed diabetes. However, the researchers found that consuming three servings per week of blueberries, grapes, raisins, apples or pears reduced the risk of type 2 diabetes by 7 percent.

5) Protecting against heart disease

Blueberries can help to preserve cardiovascular health.

The fiber, potassium, folate, vitamin C, vitamin B6, and phytonutrient 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.

Vitamin B6 and folate prevent the buildup of a compound known as homocysteine. Excessive buildup of homocysteine in the body can damage blood vessels and lead to heart problems.

6) Preventing cancer

Vitamin C, vitamin A, and the various phytonutrients 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 [Trusted Source](#) 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 [Trusted Source](#) in older women.

Studies have also found that in addition to reducing the risk of cognitive damage, blueberries can also improve a person's short-term memory [Trusted Source](#) and motor coordination.

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.

