



In praise of blueberries

... more than just another tasty fruit

By Ross Hanley

AT ONE TIME or another everybody has enjoyed a blueberry treat – perhaps a bowl of berries, or a blueberry muffin, even a berry yogurt parfait. But have you ever asked yourself: “I wonder if these berries are good for anything other than just being delicious?”

Great news! Those tiny blue wonders are so full of health benefits you’ll wonder why you don’t eat them by the fistful every day.

For starters, blueberries rank among the highest quality fruits and veggies when it comes to antioxidants.¹ The USDA Human Nutrition Research Center on Aging in Boston has created an ORAC (oxygen radical absorbance capacity) chart to determine antioxidant capacities of foods. Blueberries are rated at 2,400 per 100 grams, significantly better than other fruits that are commonly found in the American diet.¹

Why are antioxidants important to us and our health? The answer is: they help to control the free radicals that are produced by oxidation, a chemical reaction in the body’s cells that can cause tissue damage.²

Besides tasting great and looking good, blueberries also can lower cholesterol even more effectively than prescription drugs, according to new research studies at the United States Department of Agriculture¹. This is because they contain an antioxidant phytochemical known as pterostilbene,



even help to reverse this aging process by preventing degenerative free radicals and improving blood flow.

A number of studies done in Europe show that blueberries to have high levels of anthocyanin, a compound that helps to reduce eyestrain and

comparable to some prescription cholesterol medications used to lower LDL (bad cholesterol) but without such side effects as muscle pain or soreness³.

In addition, new research at the Rutgers Blueberry-Cranberry Research Center in New Jersey suggests that blueberries have similar traits to cranberries and can be used to help treat urinary tract infections. A polyphenol called epicatechin works to prevent bacteria from attaching to the lining of the bladder tissue which in turn causes the bacteria to be eliminated from the body with the urine¹.

Preliminary research also suggests that blueberries can help prevent such age-related disorders as brain deterioration, which causes short term memory loss. The antioxidant properties of the blueberry’s flavonoids may stop and

also may improve one’s visual acuity at night, making it easier to adjust to darkness and glare.

“Blueberries are known to prevent and even reverse the most common cause of blindness, macular degeneration, a disease of the retina that is the primary cause of vision loss in older adults,” according to information from Leading Brands, Inc., a B.C. company that promotes blueberry products¹ under the name True Blue Blueberry.

Blueberries have so many visual benefits that in Japan they are nicknamed “the vision fruit.” Blueberries also have been linked to better balance and coordination as well as anti-aging properties, and have been praised because of their anti-inflammatory capabilities¹.

So next time you’re at the grocery store, look for nature’s little

About the Fanshawe Fitness & Health Promotion Program

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Research shows it's a workout, an analgesic, it burns off calories, it's good for your cholesterol . . . and it helps you live longer

The benefits of sex

By Joshua Ward

SEX OFTEN is thought of simply as a way to share one's love or pleasure with a significant other. While this is true, there are many additional benefits of love-making.

For example, it has been shown that sex helps with physical problems such as general aches and pains, high LDL cholesterol, headaches, bone or joint troubles, prostate ailments and premenstrual cramps.¹

Sex, as a form of physical exercise, will burn a lot of calories. If performed three times a week it can help you lose up to 500 grams of bodyweight. That's more than a pound. Sexual intercourse for about 30 minutes can burn about 200 calories, the equivalent of running for 15 minutes on a treadmill. In the course of a year that adds up to jogging about 75 miles.

A vigorous session can increase the pulse rate from 70 to 150 beats per minute, comparable to the



rate experienced by a weight-lifter during a workout.²

Sex, it is said, trains almost every single muscle group within the human body, especially those of the pelvis, buttocks, stomach, abdomen and arms. Regular love-making exerts a favorable influence on the musculoskeletal system as well as on your production of collagen and progesterone. The latter will add smoothness and glow to women's skin and hair — and also help to prevent the onset of acne¹.

Like regular physical activity, the benefits of regular sex also include improved cholesterol levels, increased blood circulation and a better immune system.

Disease prevention

It also has been shown that people who make love regularly are better protected against a wide range of viral diseases, because safe sex helps the blood to become saturated with antibodies, a useful defence against such infectious diseases as flu and the common cold².

The list goes on: sex works as an analgesic, reducing headaches, joint pain and many other minor

ailments. In the course of lovemaking, the brain releases a high dose of the hormone oxytocin — up to five times the normal level — resulting in the production of various sedative endorphins (natural analogues of morphine). In addition, sex spurs the production of estrogen in women, helping to alleviate premenstrual pain and other problems such as headaches and arthritis¹.

As they say in the TV ads . . . But wait, there's more!

Research has shown that an active sex life helps us live longer because, like any other activity, it increases the supply of oxygen to the cells and stimulates the activity of various organs and systems within the body¹.

In addition to reducing the overall cholesterol count, sex also helps to balance the good to bad cholesterol ratio. By having sex three or more times a week, men reduce their risk of heart attack and stroke by half as well as keeping the prostate gland healthy⁴.

According to U.S. scientists, couples who make love at least three times a week usually look two or three years younger than other couples who abstain from sex¹.

Love-making usually ends with the ultimate notion of relaxation and sleep, especially if it follows a hard day at work. The rising levels of the hormone oxytocin produce a strong tranquilizing effect, allowing the body to truly relax — a perfect natural soporific medication for what ails us.

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cure-all, the blueberry. You could be seeing more clearly and remembering better in no time.

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