

## **The Benefits of Berries**

Red, Black and Blue are berry good for you! Isn't it wonderful when something that tastes so yummy is good for you? That's what you get when you get when you enjoy the delicious, sweet flavor of berries. The pigments that give berries their deep red, blue, black and purple hues are powerful, disease-fighting antioxidants. It is believed that antioxidant rich foods offer protection against conditions such as heart disease and cancer. Scientists have discovered that berries have some of the highest antioxidant levels of any fresh fruits. Raspberries, for example, contain an especially high level of antioxidants-three times more than kiwis and 10 times more than tomatoes.

### **Raspberries**

Slightly tart and juicy, the raspberry is a nutritional powerhouse in a tiny package. As if their high antioxidant content wasn't enough, raspberries are also great sources of the vitamins and minerals riboflavin, niacin, folate, magnesium, potassium, copper, manganese, and vitamin C. Note that raspberries contain oxalates so if you have kidney or gallbladder problems, consult your doctor or dietitian before eating a lot of raspberries. Raspberries are grown from June through October.

### **Blueberries**

Blueberries are small and mighty, known for their anti-inflammatory and antibacterial properties. Blueberries may also help improve learning and memory. They are rich in antioxidants, as well as B vitamins, fiber and vitamins C, E and K. Harvest time for blueberries begins mid-April and runs through early October.

### **Cranberries**

Scientific research continues to prove the health benefits of the tart and tangy cranberry. Cranberries contain antioxidants which may help the cardiovascular system, immune system and act as anti-cancer agents. They also have anti-clotting properties. Cranberries also boast fiber, vitamins A and C, and potassium. Cranberry juice is available year-round, while fresh cranberries are in-season from September to December.

### **Blackberries**

Plump, dark and juicy, blackberries are another delicious source of possible memory improvement, as well as vitamins C and E, fiber and lycopene, which protects eyesight. With anti-inflammatory and antibacterial properties, a dose of blackberries may help fight minor infections too. While the season for blackberries runs from May to July, frozen blackberries can be found all year round.

### **Strawberries**

It's easy to see why strawberries are one of the most popular berries. Fragrant, sweet and juicy, strawberries taste as good as they are for you! This rich source of vitamin C, folate, fiber and B vitamins also packs phytonutrients and antioxidants, which give strawberries heart-protecting, anti-inflammatory, and anti-cancer properties. Strawberries reach their peak between April through July when they become widely available and most delicious. Look for frozen, unsweetened strawberries in your grocery store freezer all year.

No matter how you try 'em, berries are healthy foods that do wonders for your body.

Tip from Tracey Brand RD Froedtert Hospital Corporate Wellness