

News Release From:
University of Missouri Extension
Northwest Region

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Berries and Heart Health

By Janet Hackert, Regional Nutrition and Health Education Specialist

Berries are a tasty treat and they are a healthy one too.

The June, 2013, issue of *Tufts Health and Nutrition Letter* reports results published in the journal *Circulation*, that, “women who ate the most strawberries and blueberries – three or more servings per week – were 34% less likely to suffer such an early heart attack.” The findings come from the Nurses Health Study II. This research followed about 93,600 25- to 42-year old women for 18 years, checking in with them periodically to see what they were eating and how it was affecting their health. The heart health benefits were likely attributed partly to the presence of anthocyanin, an antioxidant compound found naturally in bright red fruits like strawberries.

Berries offer other health benefits as well. One cup of strawberries provides 140% of the recommended daily allowance of Vitamin C, more than a whole medium orange. It also has 16% of the recommended dietary fiber. This fiber content makes strawberries low on the glycemic index, meaning it helps slow the body’s process of turning the berries into blood sugar, despite their sweetness. Strawberries also contain potassium, folate and more than 25% of the recommended manganese which helps process cholesterol.

Likewise, a cup of red raspberries has nearly 50% of the recommended daily allowance of Vitamin C and 30% of the recommended fiber, as well as some potassium, magnesium, calcium and Vitamin A.

Berries are good fresh as a snack or dessert, in yogurt or a smoothie, or as a salad topper. They are in season now, but can be canned, jammed, frozen or dried for a tasty and healthful part of one’s eating plan later. If you have questions about berries or preserving them, you are welcome to contact me at 660-425-6434 or HackertJ@missouri.edu. My regular office hours are 8-4:30 Monday-Friday. I will also be available at off-hours throughout the summer. Contact me by phone, email, text to email, or other electronic communications on second Saturdays (July 13, Aug 10, Sept 14) 9-11 in the morning, and second Tuesdays (July 9, Aug 13, Sept 10) 8-10 at night. Again, my number is 660-425-6434, or email me at HackertJ@missouri.edu.

For more information on berries and their health benefits or any other topic, contact me or your local University of Missouri Extension office.