

Berries Should Be on Everyone's List

What a wonderful selection of berries we have in supermarkets and greengrocers - blackberries, blueberries, raspberries and strawberries - all Australian grown and reasonably priced. Berries are what I call superfoods because they contain antioxidants, flavonols and other polyphenols that hold health benefits for preventing and managing a number of diseases.



For instance, in an analysis of data on berry intake, mental decline has been slower for women over age 70 who regularly consumed strawberries or blueberries. In this study participants who consumed at least two half-cup servings of blueberries or strawberries every week had slower mental decline. These findings are not alone in vouching for berries' longevity-promoting and cognition-boosting properties as previous studies reflect similar therapeutic actions capable of crossing the blood-brain barrier to act on areas of the brain linked to memory and cognition.

Not only that, berries are also concentrated sources of vitamins, minerals and phytosterols that translate to a massive range of health benefits, including reducing risk factors for cardiovascular disease such as obesity and oxidative stress.

Each berry has been researched to indicate possible pathways to improve health, for instance:

Strawberries improve the conversion of food into energy (mitochondrial function) -

Researchers studied the effects of eating strawberries on markers of aging, such as oxidative damage and age-related reduction in mitochondrial function. They found that with intake of the fruit, there was a significant rise in the expression of the cascade genes, which played a part in mitochondrial health and antioxidant protection.

Blueberries improve brain function -- Significant improvements in blood perfusion through the brain and enhanced working memory occurred in the blueberry group compared to the placebo group, suggesting a positive impact on cognitive function among the elderly.

Berries are shown to be helpful in managing Type 2 Diabetes and its complications - A review covering over 300 scientific studies on these fruits has shown that berry consumption can assist in the prevention and management of Type 2 diabetes.

A diet that includes a good portion of berries every day offers some of the highest level of antioxidants available, which then gives your brain a better chance at healthy functioning years into old age.