



The Color of Health

Colorful fruits and berries are becoming recognized as powerful disease fighters.

Next time you indulge yourself with a slice of Oregon Fruit red tart cherry pie, you can enjoy it all the more knowing that those tasty cherries are also a potent weapon against disease and aging. It's all thanks to the eye-catching color of that ruby-red cherry – the same phytochemicals that make plants colorful are now recognized to be powerful natural health boosters. Medical researchers around the country are discovering exciting new evidence that a “colorful” diet rich in bright and deeply colored fruits, berries, and vegetables can help ensure a longer, more disease-free life.

Dr. James A. Joseph and Dr. Daniel A. Nadeau detail the evidence of a host of health benefits gained from eating colorful foods in their book *The Color Code*. According to the researchers, “Fruits and vegetables, especially the colorful ones, contain a bushel of disease-fighting compounds,” many of them found in the pigments themselves. The book’s information has been compiled from numerous research studies ~ all indicating that filling up your plate with edible reds, purples and blues could help prevent a range of illnesses, including cancer, heart disease and strokes.



Blueberries, blackberries and cherries are especially high in anti-oxidants, key to balancing the body’s chemistry and warding off illness. And the benefits don’t stop there. According to *The Color Code*, colorful fruits and berries also have a positive effect on and may slow the symptoms of aging. In Japan, the traditional diet includes a rainbow of colorful vegetables – and Japan also happens to have the world’s longest life expectancy. In fact, the health benefits from colorful foods don’t merely prevent declines in health and memory, they actually appear to reverse some aspects of growing old.

For instance, the crimson of sour cherries has been shown to be effective in alleviating arthritis pain, providing a safer, all-natural alternative to pharmaceutical pills. Dr. Gary Stoner from the University of Ohio has studied one more reason to enjoy the sweetness of blackberries ~ they help fight cancer. Dr. Stoner demonstrated a high level of antioxidant activity in cancerous lab animals fed a blackberry-enriched diet.

Blueberries are another colorful berry that has long been used for its medicinal value, as well as being one of nature’s richest sources of antioxidants. It was recently discovered that the



indigo coloring of a plump blueberry contains chemicals that may stave off the loss of coordination and short-term memory associated with aging and can even protect the brain from Parkinson’s and Alzheimer’s disease. According to Dr. Nadeau, “perhaps most intriguing of all, the indigo pigments in blueberries may stave off the natural mental declines that occur as we age.”

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Dr. Andrew Dannenberg, Director of Cancer Prevention at New York Presbyterian Hospital, states, “It may be that the most effective form of gene therapy is diet.” *The Color Code* notes that “people with the greatest amount of antioxidants in their diets show the fewest effects of aging.” The *Code*’s Dr. Nadeau notes that “the pigments contained in fruits and vegetables are natural antioxidants that help to protect your body from the natural aging of your brain, blood vessels and other body organs as well as protect you from disease.”

Based on this new knowledge, researchers and physicians are reaffirming the importance of adding more fruits and vegetables to our diets. However, it is important to note that the health benefits of colorful plants are most potent when the fruit or vegetable is at its peak of color, which means its peak of ripeness. This can make it difficult to incorporate bright, fully



ripe fruits into a regular diet, year round. Berries and fruits are only ripe and sweet a few months each year, and the majority of store fruit is not actually picked when ripe. Instead, the fruit is harvested while still hard and green to account for time and potential fruit damage during the journey to the supermarket.

In terms of convenience and optimal ripeness, canned fruits and berries are an excellent way to regularly get that dose of colors and reap the healthful rewards of those disease-fighting fruits. Oregon Fruit Products have years of expertise in harvesting fruit at the exact peak of ripeness, and all their fruits and berries are ripened on the vine or tree until perfectly and colorfully ripe, then canned within hours to preserve their flavor and nutrients. Oregon Fruit Products are also all-natural and preservative free – the process of canning eliminates the need for artificial stabilizers.

Researchers and nutritionists alike seem to agree that colorful fruits, berries and vegetables are a crucial part of a healthy diet, and that means eating them on a regular (daily) basis. *The Color Code* sums it up well: “The old folk wisdom that you should include green and orange vegetables in your daily diet was absolutely correct. It just didn’t go far enough. Today we know that you should also include a daily supply of red, purple and blue—the more colorful the better.”

For a daily dose of color in your diet, the convenience and serving portion sizes of Oregon Fruit products are a great option for healthy-minded consumers. Canned fruits allow them to enjoy perfectly ripe fruits and berries all year round, and save time as well by not having to wash or pit before eating or adding them to a favorite pie or recipe. Opening a daily can of one of the many varieties of colorful Oregon Fruit products, from cobalt blueberries to scarlet cherries to deep purple plums, are a quick and convenient way for consumers to add more healthy “colors” to their diets, improving their health and potentially lengthening their lives.

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