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For immediate release

BLUEBERRY CONSUMPTION REDUCES GROWTH AND SPREAD OF BREAST CANCER TUMORS IN MICE

In several studies recently conducted at the Beckman Research Institute at the City of Hope, Duarte, CA researchers found that feeding blueberry powder to mice significantly reduced the growth and spread of triple negative breast cancer cells, a very aggressive form of cancer. Triple negative breast cancer accounts for 10 to 15% of all breast cancer cases and is highly resistant to traditional chemotherapy treatments. The results of this research led by Dr. Lynn Adams, in the laboratory of Dr. Shiuan Chen, are published in the October 2011 issue of *The Journal of Nutrition*.

In their research, the team fed groups of mice specially formulated diets containing 5% freeze-dried blueberry powder, 10% blueberry powder or a control diet containing no blueberry powder. All three diets had a similar nutrient composition and the animals ate and drank about the same amount regardless of group. The human equivalent of the 5% diet is about 2 cups of fresh highbush blueberries per day.

Researchers compared the size of the breast tumors that developed and discovered that on average, tumor size was 75% smaller in the 5% blueberry experimental group and 60% smaller in the 10% group as compared to the control group. The difference between the two blueberry groups was not significant. Further confirmation of the results was obtained when the researchers conducted molecular studies on tumor tissue and found significant differences between the blueberry-fed and control groups in gene patterns known to be related to inflammatory diseases and the proliferation and spread of cancer cells.

In a second study that explored the effect of consuming blueberries on the spread of breast cancer (metastasis), the research team found that mice fed a diet containing 5% blueberry powder developed 70% fewer liver cancer tumors and 25% fewer lymph node tumors when compared to the control mice.

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“Although these results were obtained with laboratory animals and cannot be applied directly to humans, we believe we have moved one step closer to ultimately finding a safe and effective diet strategy for controlling triple negative breast cancer, for which there are few therapy choices. Blueberries may well be part of that diet strategy,” remarked Dr. Adams.

The research was funded by the U.S. Highbush Blueberry Council (USHBC) and the National Institutes of Health.

The U.S. Highbush Blueberry Council consists of growers and packers in North and South America who market their blueberries in the United States. The members of the USHBC work together to promote the growth and wellbeing of the entire industry. For more information about the USHBC, please go to www.littlebluedynamos.com.

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