

the  
tasty  
berry  
that's **BIG**  
on health



When it comes to taste and nutrition, blueberries are true blue! Their sweet, fruity flavor has been enjoyed for centuries, and now, thanks to research going on in labs across the U.S. and Canada, there's big news about the blues...these tasty little berries are powerful disease fighters.

Research shows that blueberries contain natural compounds that help our bodies stay healthy and may help prevent age-related diseases, including Alzheimer's and some forms of cancer. With only 40 fat-free calories per half cup, blueberries are a source of fiber and vitamin C. A serving of blueberries is a quick way to help meet the government's recommendation of 4 servings of colorful fruits every day.



## Blueberry Researchers Have Their Say

**Here's what some of the foremost blueberry researchers are saying about blueberries and how they may contribute to our health:**

Ronald Prior, Ph. D.  
USDA Arkansas Children's  
Nutrition Center  
Little Rock, Arkansas

"We analyzed the antioxidant activity of 100 foods and found blueberries to be one of the richest sources of

all. Antioxidants are important because they reduce oxidative stress that can cause damage to cells, leading to cancer, cardiovascular disease and other diseases of aging. While the antioxidant activity of a food may not tell us directly how effective it is in fighting disease, it does provide us with strong clues and a basis for further research."

Amy Howell, Ph.D.  
Marucci Center for  
Blueberry and  
Cranberry Research  
Rutgers University  
New Brunswick,  
New Jersey

"We've found that blueberries and cranberries have something in common: they both contain proanthocyanidins, a substance we think may help prevent urinary tract infection. Our research shows that proanthocyanidins prevent harmful bacteria from adhering to the walls of the

urinary tract. When the bacteria can't attach, they can't multiply to cause infection."

James A. Joseph, Ph.D.  
USDA Human  
Nutrition Research  
Center on Aging  
Boston, Massachusetts

"Earlier research suggested that oxidative stress may be a factor in age-related loss of brain function. So, we fed antioxidant-rich blueberries to aged lab rats in one study and to mice with Alzheimer's-like

symptoms in another and found improvement in memory function and motor skills in both. Now we're studying why blueberries seem to improve brain function by taking a look at the chemistry of the brain. There may be substances in blueberries, in addition to antioxidants, that help keep the message signals moving from brain cell to brain cell."

## How the Researchers Have Their Blues at Home

**While each new study brings us closer to fully understanding how blueberries benefit health, these scientists have already made blueberries an important part of their daily diet. Here's how:**

Dr. Howell

"With a growing family and a lab to run, I go for ways to get maximum nutrition fast. My kids love the trail mix snack I make with dried blueberries, whole-grain cereal and nuts. We also like to layer fresh, frozen or canned blueberries with yogurt and granola for breakfast or dessert."

Dr. Joseph

"I'm a big fan of blueberry smoothies because they're a quick way to get a lot of nutrition in one glass. Simply whirl blueberries in a blender with juice or milk. Frozen fruit works well—it keeps your smoothie super cold."

Dr. Prior

"I eat blueberries often, usually at breakfast over cereal. I use fresh blueberries in the summer when they're in season and keep a supply in my freezer the rest of the year."





Follow the researchers' lead and get more blueberries into your diet.

Here are a few more easy ways to enjoy blueberries:

- For an almost-instant blueberry sauce, microwave fresh, frozen or drained canned blueberries with a spoonful or two of your favorite jam. Serve warm over frozen yogurt, sorbet or rice pudding
- Sprinkle blueberries over green salad or try this: Toss lettuce and sliced fresh fennel or celery with orange sections and blueberries; drizzle with olive oil and wine vinegar.
- Add fresh blueberries to sugar-free gelatin.
- Keep dried blueberries handy to add flavor and color to carrot salad, chicken salad, rice pilaf, couscous and bread stuffing.
- Heat blueberries with maple syrup to pour over whole-grain pancakes or waffles.
- Create your own juice blend with blueberry juice plus apple, cranberry or pomegranate juice.

## Buying The Blues

When purchasing fresh blueberries, look for firm, plump, dry berries with smooth skins and a silvery sheen.

- A berry's size does not indicate ripeness or sweetness, but its color does—reddish berries aren't quite ripe, but can be used in cooking.
- Avoid soft or shriveled fruit, or any signs of mold. Containers with juice stains indicate that the fruit may be bruised.

## Keeping The Blues Cool

- Refrigerate fresh blueberries as soon as you get them home, in their original plastic pack or in a covered bowl or storage container. Wash berries just before use. Use within ten days of purchase.
- When blueberries are in season, stock up and freeze your own to enjoy through the year. Although it isn't necessary, you may want to rinse the berries before freezing. Make sure they are completely dry then either return them to their original plastic pack and overwrap with a resealable plastic bag or freeze in resealable freezer bags or rigid containers.
- When you use frozen blueberries in a recipe, always measure while they're still frozen.

*Blueberries*

**U.S. Highbush Blueberry Council**

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For more blueberry information  
visit our website at [www.blueberry.org](http://www.blueberry.org)

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