## **Berry Anthocyanins can give Heart Health a Boost**

Over half of all cardiovascular episodes could be prevented by improved diet which is reflected in fruit and vegetable dietary guidelines.[[1]](#footnote-1),[[2]](#footnote-2) Now a new review published in *Molecular Aspects of Medicine*[[3]](#footnote-3) **has pinpointed that eating anthocyanin-rich berries as a key part of protecting heart health.**

The review collated evidence from 25 observational studies each evaluating links between anthocyanin intakes and risk of cardiovascular disease. Anthocyanins are plant-pigments that give berries their distinct blue/red colouration. **They are typically found in the skin of fruits but are uniquely found in the skin AND flesh of berries**.

The review found that the simple change of incorporating a few portions of fruits rich in anthocyanins, such as berries into the diet could help to significantly reduce cardiovascular disease risk, including the risk of strokes, fatal heart attacks and high blood pressure. These findings were highly promising with the additional benefit of anthocyanins appearing to give gut health a boost.

**Dr Emma Derbyshire, Public Health Nutritionist and adviser to British Summer Fruits commented**;“Rates of cardiovascular disease are all an all-time high with 420 people in the UK losing their lives daily due to this.[[4]](#footnote-4) It has long been known eating fruit and veg. is great for heart health but this research really emphasises the importance of eating an array of fruit and veg. and COLOURED varieties including berries”.

“In Australia[[5]](#footnote-5) residents are encouraged to “eat a rainbow” and in Norway berries are encouraged as part of fruit and vegetable guidelines. This new paper adds to the body of evidence that berries really are great for our health”.

**For editors:**

* Cardiovascular disease is defined as conditions affecting the heart and blood vessels including heart attacks and strokes.[[6]](#footnote-6)
* Norway[[7]](#footnote-7) appears to be leading the way advising that residents should: *“Have a varied diet with plenty of vegetables, fruit and berries, wholegrain products and fish, and limited amounts of processed meat, red meat, and salt and sugar” and “Eat at least five portions of vegetables, fruits and berries each day*”. **Other counties including the UK fail to identify specific fruits with health benefits within their dietary guidelines**.

* The anthocyanin content of berries is:

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Berry** | **Serving Size** | **mg/serving** |
| Blackberries | ½ cup | 70.4 |
| Blueberries | ½ cup | 120.8 |
| Raspberries | ½ cup | 30.2 |
| Strawberries | ½ cup | 20.5 |

USDA Database for the Flavonoid Content of Selected Foods.

* The colour/pigmentation of the fruit and vegetables that we eat could well be as important as the amount that we eat.
* As evidence grows the UK may consider adding specific advice about berries to its fruit and vegetable guidelines.

**ENDS**

1. Ezzati, M & Riboli, E. (2013) Behavioral and dietary risk factors for noncommunicable diseases. N. Engl. J. Med. 369, 954e964. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. http://www.who.int/elena/titles/fruit\_vegetables\_ncds/en/ [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. [Cassidy A](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/?term=Cassidy%20A%5BAuthor%5D&cauthor=true&cauthor_uid=28483533)(2018) Berry anthocyanin intake and cardiovascular health. [Mol Aspects Med](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/28483533) 61:76-82. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. https://www.bhf.org.uk/research/heart-statistics [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. <http://www.nutritionaustralia.org/national/resource/eat-rainbow> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. http://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/noncommunicable-diseases/cardiovascular-diseases/cardiovascular-diseases2/definition-of-cardiovascular-diseases [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. <http://www.fao.org/nutrition/education/food-based-dietary-guidelines/regions/countries/norway/en/> [↑](#footnote-ref-7)