**Berries can significantly reduce cardiovascular disease**

A new review has shown that eating berries can play a key role in protecting heart health.

Berries are high in anthocyanins - plant-pigments which give berries their distinct blue/red colouration - and are uniquely found in both the skin and flesh of berries unlike just the skin of other fruits.

The new review, published in Molecular Aspects of Medicine, [[1]](#footnote-1)found that incorporating a few portions of fruits rich in anthocyanin, such as berries, into the diet could help to significantly reduce cardiovascular disease risk, including strokes, fatal heart attacks and high blood pressure. There is also evidence that anthocyanins can give gut health a boost.

**Dr Emma Derbyshire, Public Health Nutritionist and adviser to British Summer Fruits said:** “Rates of cardiovascular disease are all an all-time high with 420 people in the UK losing their lives daily due to this.[[2]](#footnote-2) It has long been known eating fruit and vegetables is great for heart health but this research really emphasises the importance of eating an array of fruit and vegetables and COLOURED varieties including berries”.

“In Australia[[3]](#footnote-3) 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”.

ENDS

**Notes to editors:**

* Cardiovascular disease is defined as conditions affecting the heart and blood vessels including heart attacks and strokes.[[4]](#footnote-4)
* Norway[[5]](#footnote-5) 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:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **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.

1. [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-1)
2. https://www.bhf.org.uk/research/heart-statistics [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. <http://www.nutritionaustralia.org/national/resource/eat-rainbow> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. http://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/noncommunicable-diseases/cardiovascular-diseases/cardiovascular-diseases2/definition-of-cardiovascular-diseases [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. <http://www.fao.org/nutrition/education/food-based-dietary-guidelines/regions/countries/norway/en/> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)