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Science Strongly Supports Cranberry Benefits for Urinary Tract Health

Cranberry researchers encourage consumers to consider the wealth of evidence supporting the health benefits of cranberries

CARVER, Mass. (Oct. 19, 2012) – Cranberries in many forms are enjoyed by millions of people globally on a daily basis. Despite the discussions stemming from the recent Cochrane Review, “Cranberries for preventing urinary tract infections”, cranberry science and nutrition experts assert that consumers should still feel confident in consuming cranberries as a means of maintaining urinary tract health. There is a wealth of scientific evidence, from independent research institutions globally, that has demonstrated that regular consumption of cranberry products helps promote urinary tract health.

“UTIs affect over 15 million U.S. women each year, and cranberries are regarded and researched as a viable means to help address the public health challenge that management of UTIs present, including the growing issue of antibiotic resistances,” says [Dr. Amy Howell](#), Associate Research Scientist at the Marucci Blueberry and Cranberry Research at Rutgers University in New Jersey. “For decades, cranberries have been recognized for their powerful anti-adhesion properties against bacteria like *E. coli* that cause urinary tract infections. The Cochrane [Review](#) analyzed results from some of the clinical trials, using criteria that apply to studies on drug treatments. These are not necessarily appropriate for diet and nutrition research.”

Dr. Howell’s position is supported in the scientific literature. Three new UTI clinical studies published after the Cochrane Review was prepared have indicated significant benefits in children, with the participants experiencing as much as a 65% reduction in UTIs and subsequent use of antibiotics. It is also important to note that a recent review contradicts the results of the Cochrane findings. In the [July 9, 2012 publication of the Archives of Internal Medicine](#), scientists reviewed thirteen cranberry and urinary tract health trials with 1,616 subjects and concluded that cranberry-containing products are associated with protective effects against UTIs. In addition, the [Journal of Infection and Chemotherapy](#) published a randomized clinical trial involving female patients with UTIs suffering from multiple relapses and the impact of cranberry juice. The results showed that cranberry juice prevented the recurrence of UTIs in a subgroup of this female population with 24-week intake of the beverage. This is another indication of the positive attributes of cranberries with respect to the urinary tract health.

Cranberry Benefits Go Beyond Urinary Tract Health

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), cranberry juice may also have a beneficial effect on blood pressure due to polyphenolic antioxidant compounds found in cranberries. The study, led by Janet Novotny, research physiologist for the USDA's Agricultural Research Service, recently presented at the American Heart Association's High Blood Pressure Research 2012 Scientific Sessions, found that participants who drank cranberry juice as part of a healthy diet had lower blood pressure levels than those participants who did not.

"Cranberries naturally contain the flavonoid, proanthocyanidin (PAC) and other polyphenols that have potential health benefits," explains Connie Diekman, MEd, RD, LD, FADA, past president of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, formerly the American Dietetic Association. "Flavonoids have been heralded in heart health promotion."

Given that Americans are looking for options to increase their fruit and vegetable intake, Diekman urges consumers to consider cranberry products as a way to achieve the recommendations.

"Cranberries fit within the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and MyPlate recommendations," states Diekman. "Cranberry products – cranberry juice cocktail, dried cranberries, cranberry sauce or fresh cranberries – give people that slightly sweet but tart and tangy taste they enjoy, so it's easy to help them incorporate into their daily lives."

"The bottom line is if people are currently consuming cranberry products for their positive health benefits, the results of the Cochrane Review do not provide a compelling reason for them to change their current practices," recommends Dr. Howell.

For more information about the health benefits of cranberries and current scientific research visit www.CranberryInstitute.org.

About the Cranberry Institute

The Cranberry Institute is a not-for-profit organization founded in 1951 to further the success of cranberry growers and the industry in the Americas through health, agricultural and environmental stewardship research as well as cranberry promotion and education. The Cranberry Institute is funded voluntarily by Supporting Members that handle, process, and sell cranberries. Supporting Members are represented in national and international regulatory matters and research efforts are done on their behalf.

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