

Three new studies link eating red to a healthy heart

April 12 2011

Tart cherries have a unique combination of powerful antioxidants that may help reduce risk factors for heart disease, according to new research presented at the Experimental Biology annual meeting in Washington, DC.

In a series of three studies, researchers from University of Michigan, University of Arizona and Brunswick labs studied the antioxidant levels and anti-inflammatory benefits of tart cherries. They found:

- Reduced Inflammation and [Cardiovascular Risk](#): Drinking eight ounces of tart cherry juice daily for four weeks significantly reduced important markers of inflammation in a study of 10 overweight or obese adults. Many of the adults also had lower levels of uric acid (linked to inflammation and gout) and triglycerides (linked to heart disease). ¹
- Reduced Atherosclerosis and other [Heart Disease Risk](#): A cherry diet (at 1% of diet as tart cherry powder) reduced C [reactive protein](#) and other markers of inflammation by up to 36 percent and lowered levels of total cholesterol by 26 percent in a five-month mouse study. The researchers suggest that there's an atherosclerosis benefit connected to both lowering cholesterol, and an anti-inflammatory effect, specifically in the blood vessels coming from the heart. Importantly, the mice eating the cherry diets had a 65 percent reduction in early death, likely due to

improved [cardiovascular health](#).²

- **Powerful Antioxidants:** The heart benefits and many others may be due to the unique combination of natural antioxidant compounds in the "Super Fruit." About one cup of freeze-dried tart cherries have an ORAC over 10,000, and contain a diverse combination of antioxidant compounds and phytochemicals likely responsible for their health benefits, according to the researchers.³

The Power of Eating RED

This is the latest in a growing body of science linking cherries to protection against heart disease and inflammation. Previous research from the University of Michigan revealed that cherry-enriched diets in animals lowered multiple risk factors for heart disease, from lowering total blood cholesterol levels to reducing total body weight and fat, in particular the "belly fat" that is most often associated with heart disease risk.^{4,5} The University of Michigan researchers, using a "whole food" approach, also found the cherry-enriched diets reduced not only overall body inflammation, but inflammation at key sites (belly fat, heart) known to affect [heart disease](#) risk in obese, at-risk rats.⁶

Researchers attribute the benefits to anti-inflammatory, antioxidant compounds in the red fruit called anthocyanins, also responsible for cherries' bright red color. In addition to heart health benefits, research also suggests cherries could affect inflammation related to muscle recovery post-workout and arthritis.

Available year-round in dried, juice and frozen form, it's easy to incorporate the RED power of cherries into the daily diet to manage [inflammation](#)— from topping dried cherries in oatmeal to making a heart-smart smoothie with cherry juice and lowfat yogurt.

More information: Sources:

1 Martin KR, Bopp J, Burrell L, Hook G. The effect of 100% tart cherry juice on serum uric acid levels, biomarkers of inflammation and cardiovascular disease risk factors. *FASEB Journal*. 2011.

2 Seymour EM, Kondoleon MG, Huang MG, Kirakosyan A, Kaufman PB, Bolling SF. *FASEB Journal*. 2011.

3 Seymour EM, Ou B. Phytochemical and diverse antioxidant profile of whole tart cherries (*Prunus Cerasus*). *FASEB Journal*. 2011.

4 Seymour EM, Singer AAM, Bennink MR, Bolling SF. Cherry-enriched diets reduce metabolic syndrome and oxidative stress in lean Dahl-SS rats. *Experimental Biology* 2007 225.8, Presented in minisymposium 225, Dietary Bioactive Compounds: Chronic Disease Risk Reduction.

5 Seymour EM, Lewis A, Kirakosyan A, Bolling S. The Effect of Tart Cherry-Enriched Diets on Abdominal Fat Gene Expression in Rats. American Dietetic Association FNCE 2008.

6 Seymour EM, Urcuyo-Llanes D, Bolling SF, Bennink MR. Tart cherry intake reduces plasma and tissue inflammation in obesity-prone rats. *FASEB Journal*. 2010; 24:335.1.

Provided by Weber Shandwick Worldwide

Citation: Three new studies link eating red to a healthy heart (2011, April 12) retrieved 25 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2011-04-link-red-healthy-heart.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private

study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.