

The power of blueberries and oranges



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**Cooperative Extension
Education Resource**

Blueberries and oranges are excellent sources of nutrients, helping our body fight chronic diseases.

The power of blueberries

Sidekicks: purple grapes, cranberries, boysenberries, raspberries, strawberries, currants, cherries, and all other varieties of fresh, frozen, or dried berries. **Eat at least 1 to 2 cups daily.**

Blueberries contain: Salicylic acid, carotenoids, fiber, folate, vitamin C, vitamin E, potassium, manganese, magnesium, iron, riboflavin, niacin, phytoestrogens, low calories.



The blueberry combines more powerful disease-fighting antioxidants than any other fruit or vegetable. They are called “brain berries” and “youth berries.” Just one serving of blueberries provides as many antioxidants as five servings of carrots, apples, broccoli, or squash. Blueberries have extraordinary health and anti-aging benefits and may lowering your risk of cardiovascular disease and cancer. And we can’t forget their help in maintaining healthy skin and reducing the sags and bags brought on by age. One recent study published in the *Journal of Clinical Nutrition* found that people who ate the equivalent of 1 cup of blueberries daily had an increased level of antioxidants in their blood – an increase which is now being studied as a “physiologic state” that plays an important role in the prevention of cardiovascular disease, diabetes, senility, cancer, and degenerative eye diseases like macular degeneration and cataracts.

Ways to eat blueberries:

- Sprinkle berries and wheat germ on yogurt
- Mix frozen berries in hot oatmeal or toss on cold cereal
- Whip into a smoothie with yogurt, banana, ice, and soy or nonfat milk
- Drop some on whole-wheat buttermilk pancakes just before turning them
- Enjoy a cup of berries in soy milk sweetened with buckwheat honey
- Nibble from a big bowl of fresh blueberries while sitting on the porch

Oranges

Sidekicks: lemons, white and pink grapefruit, kumquats, tangerines, limes. **Eat 1 cup daily.**

Oranges contain: Vitamin C, potassium, fiber, polyphenols, folate, pectin, limonene

Oranges are rich in vitamin C support heart health and may prevent cancer, stroke, diabetes, and a host of chronic ailments. Pectin is the dietary fiber in oranges and it is very effective in helping to reduce cholesterol. It is present in large amounts in the white lining of citrus fruit (known as albedo). An easy way to increase your pectin intake is to eat the pith, the white thread-like material attached to the inside of the peel. Dietary pectin has been shown to lower glucose absorption and thus insulin production in people with Type II Diabetes, which is fast becoming an epidemic in developed countries.

Vitamin C, which is abundantly available in oranges, also plays a role in fighting cancer. In fact, there is a relatively consistent inverse association of vitamin C with cancer of the stomach, oral cancer, and cancer of the esophagus. This makes sense as vitamin C protects against nitrosamines, cancer-causing agents found in food that are thought to be responsible for instigating cancers of the mouth, stomach, and colon. One Swiss study found that those who died of any type of cancer had vitamin C concentrations about 10 percent lower than those who died from other causes.

It has been estimated that drinking 1 cup of orange juice daily may lower the risk of stroke in healthy men by 25 percent while the risk is reduced only 2 percent from other fruits. Vitamin C in supplement form does not appear to have the same benefits as the whole fruit when it comes to stroke prevention. Another reason to rely on whole foods for optimal nutrition!



Get some orange in your life:

- Eat an orange, tangerine, or Clementine everyday
- Add mandarin orange segments to a spinach salad with chopped red onion
- Sprinkle grapefruit halves with a dusting of brown sugar and broil for a great dessert
- Add orange juice to a fruit smoothie
- Keep some orange and/or lemon zest in your freezer: put it in cakes, cookies, muffins, or even drinks for a refreshing boost of nutrition and flavor. Sprinkle on yogurt, in fruit salads, and even chicken salad. Use citrus zest in hot tea
- Citrus juice adds a flavor boost to many poultry and fish dishes

Use orange wedges as a refresher for athletes, young and old. They give a much-needed boost of antioxidants and vitamin C on the playing field or at the gym.