

## Health Notes

### **The Blueberry... and Health**

by Craft Chiropractic Associates, PC

The blueberry is a member of the heath family, with its scientific family name being ERICACEAE. The Vaccinium genus contains almost 200 species of berries, including the cranberry and the European bilberry. The bilberry has similar chemistry and uses as our blueberry.


There has been a significant amount of research in Europe investigating the health benefits of this species of berry. The medicinal part of the blueberry is the ripe fruit.

One of the most common uses of this species of berry is as a remedy for eye conditions. British World War II pilots believed that eating the blueberry's cousin, the bilberry, improved their night vision. Research has suggested that these berries might even help simple glaucoma, myopia, retinopathies and macular degeneration.

Vascular disorders, such as varicose veins and hemorrhoids (particularly during pregnancy), spider veins, peripheral vascular disease, and nosebleeds all have been shown to benefit by ingesting this berry.

Known as a powerful antioxidant, there have been studies linking this fruit to anti-carcinogenic activities. The blueberry acts as a free-radical scavenger.

This fruit also reduces the production of what are called pro-inflammatory substances. Pro-inflammatory substances, such as histamine, are released from injured cells. Controlling histamine levels can help minimize allergic responses and control the swelling of injured tissues. Dried fruit, capsules, tablets, liquid tinctures, and fluid extracts all contain much more of the beneficial substances desired from the blueberry than from a fresh berry. There are no known toxicities, contraindications, or side effects from the blueberry. It is usually considered very safe for long-term use. Normal food quantities are considered safe but there may be a potential for increased bleeding if taken with anticoagulants such as coumadin.

As with treatment of any disease or condition, please consult a health professional before you change methods. 

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