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CHOOSE CHERRIES FOR A POWERFUL PHYTONUTRIENT PACKAGE
New research pinpoints specific cherry compounds that work together for an antioxidant advantage

LANSING, Mich., March 17, 2010 – Food and nutrition experts agree that getting an antioxidant boost and eating a diet rich in fruits and vegetables can provide important health and wellness benefits. But, scientists now understand that it’s the unique phytonutrient profile of each fruit or vegetable that tells the whole story behind the benefits of these foods.

In fact, cherries’ unique compounds may work synergistically to deliver a powerful antioxidant punch, according to a new study from the University of Michigan researchers published in *Food Chemistry*.¹ The researchers isolated individual cherry phytonutrients and tested the antioxidant power alone, or paired together. They found that the “whole” was greater than the sum of its parts – specific compounds worked together to boost antioxidant power more than would be expected for any one compound on its own.

“This research tells a powerful ‘whole’ fruit story – there’s something about the unique array of compounds in a fruit that is vital for the full health potential,” said E. Mitchell Seymour, PhD, research scientist at the University of Michigan Cardiovascular Center and one of the study co-authors. “If you pull out any of the phytonutrients to stand on its own, you simply won’t get the same power as the full combination you find in whole cherries.”

The Phytonutrient Match Up, available at choosecherries.com, provides an at-a-glance look at how cherries unique package of phytonutrients stack up to other Super Fruits, including “gold standards” like blueberries and pomegranates.

A True Super Fruit

Known for their bright red color, cherries are particularly rich in anthocyanins – compounds linked to reduced inflammation associated with heart disease, arthritis and even muscle recovery post-exercise. In fact, the latest in a growing body of science linking cherries to powerful anti-inflammatory benefits shows that drinking tart cherry juice may help runners recover more quickly and effectively from post-race pain.²

“What I love about cherries is that their powerful phytonutrient profile gives them a unique anti-inflammatory advantage which supports today’s active, on-the-go consumer,” said

Leslie Bonci, Director of Sports Nutrition at the University of Pittsburgh. “It’s important to eat a variety of fruits and vegetables, but cherries are an ideal power-packed food.”

In addition to pain and recovery benefits, previous research from the University of Michigan revealed that cherry-enriched diets in animals lowered multiple risk factors for heart disease. In 2007, researchers found that cherry-enriched diets in animals lowered total blood cholesterol levels and reduced triglycerides (fatty acids).³ And, in 2008, the University of Michigan researchers found animals fed a cherry-enriched diet saw reduced total body weight and fat by 14 percent, in particular the “belly fat” that is most often associated with heart disease risk.⁴

Your Daily Diet: Powered by Red

With year-round availability as dried, frozen and juice, it’s easy to incorporate cherries into the daily menu. Bonci recommends the following tips to help reap the powerful phytonutrient benefits every day:

- *Brighten up Breakfast* – Swap your typical berries for dried cherries and add them to your cereal, oatmeal, yogurt or pancakes. Just one half cup of dried tart cherries gives you one whole serving of fruit!
- *Power Snacking* – Keep a stash of dried cherries on hand for a phytonutrient-rich snack break. Buy single-serve packages or portion out those bought in bulk to keep in your purse, desk or gym bag.
- *Grab and Go* – Get your antioxidants on-the-go with an easy "do-it-yourself" trail mix using dried cherries, almonds and whole-grain cereal. Or add dried cherries to ready-made granola.

For more information on *The Phytonutrient Match Up*, the potential health benefits of cherries, and for inspiring recipes and tips, visit www.choosecherries.com.

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The Cherry Marketing Institute (CMI) is an organization funded by North American tart cherry growers and processors. CMI’s mission is to increase the demand for tart cherries through promotion, market expansion, product development and research. For more information on the science supporting the unique health benefits of cherries and for cherry recipes and menu ideas, visit www.choosecherries.com.

¹ Kirakosyan A, Seymour EM, Noon KR, Llanes DEU, Kaufman PB, Warber SL, Bolling SF. Interactions of antioxidants isolated from tart cherry (*Prunus cerasus*) fruits. *Food Chemistry*. 2010. Epub ahead of print.

² Kuehl KS, Chestnutt J, Elliot DL, Lilley C. Efficacy of tart cherry juice in reducing muscle pain after strenuous exercise. *American College of Sports Medicine*. 851. May, 2009.

³ 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.

⁴ 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.