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**NEW HUMAN STUDY REINFORCES ANTIOXIDANT
BENEFITS OF TART CHERRIES**
***Scientists Discover Eating Cherries May Elevate Antioxidant
Activity in the Body***

April 19, 2009, NEW ORLEANS --- Eating just one and a half servings of tart cherries could significantly boost antioxidant activity in the body, according to new University of Michigan research reported at the 2009 Experimental Biology meeting in New Orleans.¹ In the study, healthy adults who ate a cup and a half of frozen cherries had increased levels of antioxidants, specifically five different anthocyanins – the natural antioxidants that give cherries their red color.

Twelve healthy adults, aged 18 to 25 years, were randomly assigned to eat either one and a half cups or three cups of frozen tart cherries. Researchers analyzed participants' blood and urine at regular intervals after they ate the cherries and found increased antioxidant activity for up to 12 hours after eating cherries.

“This study documents for the first time that the antioxidants in tart cherries do make it into the human bloodstream and is coupled with increased antioxidant activity that could have a positive impact,” said Sara L. Warber, MD, Co-Director of University of Michigan Integrative Medicine and principal investigator of the study. “And, while more research is needed, what’s really great is that a reasonable amount of cherries could potentially deliver benefits, like reducing risk factors for heart disease and inflammation.”

Previous animal studies have linked cherries and cherry compounds to important benefits, including helping to lower risk factors for heart disease and impacting inflammation. Dr. Warber’s colleagues at the University of Michigan have previously shown in animals that cherry-enriched diets can lower blood cholesterol levels and reduce triglycerides, an unhealthy type of blood fat.² Other benefits of cherries found in animal studies include a 14 percent lower body weight and less “belly fat,” the type linked with increased heart disease risk and type 2 diabetes.³

“It’s encouraging when research like ours finds that great-tasting fruit can lead to real-life benefits, continuing to underscore the importance of whole foods in the diet,” said Dr. Warber.

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It's Easy to Enjoy "America's Super Fruit"

Cherries are not only good for you, but they're also a homegrown "Super Fruit." According to recent data, more than 9 out of 10 Americans want to know where their food comes from, nearly 80 percent say they're purchasing "locally produced" products, and the majority are defining "local" as made in America.^{4,5}

About 95% percent of cherries consumed in the U.S. are grown here, with most coming from Michigan, Wisconsin, Utah, Washington, Oregon, Pennsylvania and New York.

This homegrown advantage, coupled with potential health benefits, make cherries "America's Super Fruit." Tart cherries come in dried, frozen and juice forms so they're readily available to enjoy all year long.

Funding for the study was provided by the Cherry Marketing Institute, 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.

Sources:

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- 2: 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.
- 3: 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.
- 4: Survey conducted by IRI Data, 2008
- 5: Survey conducted by The Hartman Group, 2008