



Cherries

Not just another berry.

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**TART CHERRIES PROVIDE NATURAL AND TASTY
ALTERNATIVE TO SUPPLEMENTS FOR ARTHRITIS SUFFERERS**

Millions diagnosed with arthritis could benefit from cherries to help soothe their symptoms during National Arthritis Month

May 9, 2007—Arthritis affects about one in every five Americans, who often turn to the dietary supplement chondroitin to ease their pain. Despite its popularity, new research suggests you may be better off adding foods like cherries to your diet than spending money on pills.

Tart cherries (the variety sold as dried, frozen and juice) are one of the richest sources of anthocyanins, which have anti-inflammatory properties that are similar to some types of pain relief medications. For years, tart cherries have quietly grown a fan base of arthritis sufferers who routinely consumed the fruit to help soothe their symptoms. Although this anecdotal evidence has existed for decades, there now appears to be science behind the cherry folklore.¹⁻⁵

However, a new study published in the *Annals of Internal Medicine*⁶ concluded that the benefit of chondroitin supplements is “minimal or nonexistent.” Researchers evaluated 20 earlier studies in this new meta-analysis of patients with osteoarthritis of the knee or hip.

Cherries May Ease Arthritis Pain

The same compounds that make cherries red are also responsible for the anti-inflammatory benefits. Anthocyanins appear to help reduce inflammation and aid in the prevention, management or treatment of arthritis and gout. These inflammatory disorders are often associated with elevated levels of uric acid in the blood. Recently, scientists at the USDA Human Nutrition Research Center at the University of California,

Davis, found that healthy women (ages 20-40 years) showed a reduction in uric acid levels after consuming two servings of cherries.⁷

“The evidence was always anecdotal, but it was repeated so often and by so many people that it made us think there was something to it,” said Russel Reiter, Ph.D., nutrition researcher at the University of Texas Health Science Center who has studied the benefits of tart cherries for many years. “That’s why we’ve explored this connection from a scientific standpoint.”

The Arthritis Foundation recommends a diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains and omega-3 fatty acids⁸. One serving of cherries is equal to ½ cup dried cherries, 8 ounces cherry juice, 2 tablespoons cherry juice concentrate, or 1 cup frozen cherries. Tart cherries can easily be found year-round, making it easy for arthritis sufferers to benefit from this powerful fruit during National Arthritis Month in May and beyond.

An Antioxidant Advantage

Cherries are also rich in antioxidants—substances that seek out and destroy free-radicals, harmful molecules that circulate in the body. Studies show that cherries are effective in reducing levels of nitric oxide, a compound associated with osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis.^{9, 10}

“There’s a significant body of evidence suggesting that cherries are one of the most nutritious fruits you can eat,” says Reiter. “Cherries not only contain significant levels of antioxidants, but they provide a unique combination of antioxidants that are not found in other fruits.” Cherries are an excellent source of beta carotene (vitamin A), vitamins C and E, and they provide potassium, magnesium, iron, folate and fiber.

To learn more about the unique health benefits of cherries and to get a copy of “The Cherry Nutrition Report,” visit www.choosecherries.com. You can also find new cherry recipes, menu ideas, and more information on where you can buy cherry products.

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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.

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