

Anti-Aging Superfood

Eat your blueberries! This delicious fruit is not only considered an anti-aging superfood, but also helps prevent colon cancer, the second leading cause of cancer deaths in the United States and Great Britain.



The magic ingredient appears to be a potent antioxidant called pterostilbene, which is found in the pigment that gives blueberries their rich purple color, according to researchers from Rutgers University in Piscataway, N.J., and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. While blueberries won't cure colon cancer, they could go a long way toward preventing it. "This study underscores the need to include more berries in the diet, especially blueberries," said lead study author Dr. Bandaru Reddy. Rising rates of colon cancer in Western countries have been linked to high-fat, high-calorie diets.

The study: Eighteen rats were injected with azoxymethane, a colon cancer-causing compound. For eight weeks, half the rats were given a balanced daily diet, while the other half were fed the same diet supplemented with pterostilbene.

The results: The rats that were fed pterostilbene had 57 percent fewer pre-cancerous lesions in their colons, compared to the rats who only received the balanced diet without pterostilbene. In addition, the compound appeared to reduce the growth rate of the cancerous cells, as well as inhibited certain genes involved in inflammation, both of which are implicated in the development of the disease.

The findings are so promising scientists are hopeful a blueberry-based preventative pill for colon cancer can soon be developed, which would have far fewer side effects than current commercial medications.

And if that's not enough reason to sprinkle a few blueberries on your morning cereal, consider this: Previous research has shown that blueberries also improve short-term memory loss, enhance balance and coordination and help prevent heart disease.

The study findings were presented to the 233rd national meeting of the American Chemical Society in Washington, D.C., March 2007. Funding for this study was provided by the National Cancer Institute.