



Cranberries for Health

New research
on the anti-inflammatory power of
Cranberries



Women have long appreciated the medicinal powers of cranberry—the small bitter fruit is often advised for use during a urinary tract infection (UTI).

Those who have used this small, bitter berry to reduce the pain and inflammation of a bladder infection won't be surprised to learn of a new research *study which sheds a startling new light on a holiday classic.*

In a study led by Catherine Neto at the University of Massachusetts-Dartmouth, published in the Journal of the Science of Food and Agriculture last month, an active ingredient in cranberries inhibited the growth of tumor cells. Proanthocyanidins are an anti-inflammatory, antioxidant ingredient in cranberries that a series of scientific studies, including those conducted by Neto, have

been honing in on.

The recent laboratory tests demonstrated that cranberry proanthocyanidins inhibited the growth of lung tumors. Impressively, although cranberry extract fractions brought about “significant inhibition of the proliferation of cancer cells,” healthy cells weren't affected—a promising step in anti-cancer research.

Human cancer cell growth has been slowed down in lab tests previously. This latest test specifies proanthocyanidins as the specific chemical components of cranberries which reduce the spread of cancer tumors.

While other berries besides cranberries contain proanthocyanidins, no other fruit's chemical structure has been found to work in quite the same way.

Neto's most recent study suggests that there may be even more to cranberry's medicinal powers. Complementing proanthocyanidins, quercetin and ursolic acid are two additional antioxidant compounds in cranberries. Both chemical compounds have been featured in scientific studies to determine the degree of their cancer-detering components.

The October study wasn't the first demonstrating cranberries' healing, antioxidant properties. A 1993 study, also by Neto, found the miniscule, deep red fruit to be linked to radically reduced brain cell damage after a stroke. Scientists know that the berry's power in treating UTI's comes from its antibacterial, anti-adhesion qualities, but research hints that there's much more to be learned about the healing power of this tangy, tasty fruit. In the laboratory tests, tumor growth was slowed by both cranberry extract and proanthocyanidins fractions. However, the tumors were more greatly inhibited by the cranberry extract. Neto said she believes that eating cranberries or taking cranberry supplements can have potential for benefit.