

The naturopathic advisor



Experts from the College of Naturopathic Medicine answer your health questions. This issue, you asked:



Q What's so good about berries?

Besides being a fabulous feast for the eyes with their rich colours and tactile shapes, berries offer not only a delightful cocktail of flavours but also a powerhouse of anthocyanins, flavonoids, polyphenols and other tongue-twisting substances, which point to their antioxidant and nutrient-rich content. And by the way, organic produce is richer in these health-promoting compounds and does not have toxic pesticide spray burden.

On top of all those benefits, berries have a surprisingly minimal effect on blood sugar levels so they can be suitable for people with blood sugar sensitivities, such as diabetes, candida and

any condition requiring a low sugar diet.

In fact, very recent studies from the Illinois Institute of Technology and Oklahoma State University found that consuming less than one cup of raspberries every morning can reduce the chances of developing diabetes, even in people who are already at risk, overweight or obese and already showing signs of insulin resistance. Apparently, raspberries for breakfast significantly reduced insulin levels, and when people who already had diabetes were tested, it was found that their blood glucose was significantly lower after they had eaten raspberries for a month. The berries reduced hyperglycaemia (high blood sugar) and inflammation markers, the researchers said.

So, what do flavonoids and antioxidants do? Well, they combat oxidative stress, scavenging the free radicals which, according to science, seem to damage and age our cardiovascular, immune, nervous and other body systems. The varied antioxidant and anti-inflammatory compounds found in berries sustain our whole

body, increasing resistance to stress, infection, inflammation and disease. And being rich in vitamin C, berries further support our immune system, adrenal function and skin. As if that's not enough, berries also contain natural antibacterial compounds, such as tannins and hydroquinone.

Eating a wide variety of vegetables and fruit is essential to get a range of nutrients. Choose the freshest possible in season and locally grown in order to avoid deterioration in nutrient content. Having said that, berries frozen at their best still pack a nutritional punch. If you have no access to fresh berries, use frozen ones throughout the seasons for a delicious, nutrient-dense addition to your smoothies.



Your expert

Your question has been answered by Naturopath, Elle Fox, CNM graduate, author and speaker. CNM trains students for successful careers in a range of natural health therapies, in class and online. Visit www.naturopathy.ie or call 01 878 8060.

A SUMMER detox



HEALTH STORES IRELAND UPDATE



Head to your local shop to discover all you need for a healthy summer, suggests Health Stores Ireland President, Gerald Colfer.

Most of us have probably reached for the detox tea and that forgotten pack of quinoa on January 1, appalled by our Christmas excesses and vowing to turn over a new leaf for a new year. There's nothing wrong with this but I often think that summer is a better time for a cleanse.

As we come into the summer season, we're more inclined to look for lighter meals inspired, as we are, by the arrival of fresh, local fruits and vegetables. Winter's roots make way for summer's leafier veg and salads, and stir fries and fresh juices all take on a new, fresh appeal. Many of us choose to do more frequent, short periods of fasting these days anyway so, if

you haven't done so before, why not try a summer weekend detox to give your system a rest?

You know the drill. Lock away the tea, coffee and alcohol. Forget about sugary, fat-laden convenience foods and instead head to your local farmers market and be inspired by the array of fresh, local produce on offer. Make some simple vegetable soups, luxurious salads from vegetables and fruits, toasted nuts and seeds and your own tangy dressing to bring them to life, and how about some simple grain and protein dishes like curries and casseroles? Check out the wealth of detox friendly recipes online but, above all, don't get frazzled, and keep it simple.

Up your intake of herb tea,

water and juice. Fresh juices are optimal, but your local health store will also stock some excellent organic, bottled versions. Perhaps introduce some powdered greens in your juices. Things such as cereal grass powders, chlorella and spirulina all help to nourish and alkalise the body and stimulate the metabolism to throw off some accumulated toxins.

Use herbal help if you feel the need. Milk thistle will stimulate the liver and cleaves the lymph system, two of the body's main cleansing pathways. For the same reason, make sure your bowels are functioning optimally. If you have a history of difficulty in this area, introduce some probiotics and gentle fibre like psyllium. There are many effective detox formulas to work on all the organs of elimination. These include the traditional native American

formula, Flor Essence, as well as many newer combination products. Ask in your local shop about which is most suitable to your needs. If you're taking medication, take it a few hours away from any detox aids like this.

Lastly, why not give your head and soul a breather too? If it's possible, make this time out from everyday pressures. Take a little break from all the news channels that bombard us 24/7 if we let them. Instead, meditate and look inwards. Choose to nourish yourself with gentle music or silence, rather than always reacting to the world.

And when you show up on Monday morning with a glow to the skin and a lightness of step, tell them you've been to an expensive spa or just leave them guessing!

Find out more at www.healthstores.ie