

Red Clover

Essentials for Healthy Living

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'Tis the Season to be Berry

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All over the world—in every rain forest and in every desert—a myriad of exotic berries, fruits, plants, and herbs that have been found to have powerful, life-saving properties exist. Most of the fruits and berries are astoundingly high in antioxidants and offer a broad range of health benefits including protection from free radical damage, which has been associated with a number of chronic diseases including cancer, heart disease, suppressed immune function, and accelerated aging. Many of these fruits also help maintain a strong immune and cardiovascular system, while the whole grains and plants provide crucial gastro-intestinal support.

But with the thousands of different berries and fruits grown all over the planet, how do you know which ones provide the greatest health benefits? You let the research do the talking. And the research says that pomegranates, cherries, berries, goji berries, and the tried-and-true aloe vera plant are far ahead of the pack.

Potent Pomegranates

Pomegranates seem to be all the rage here in the United States, but this funny little fruit has been used medicinally in the Middle East, Iran, India, Egypt, and Greece for thousands of years. High in antioxidants (especially polyphenols) and ellagic acid, pomegranates have been found to help repair free radical damage. Specifically, research indicates that pomegranates may play a role in preventing and treating cancer and heart disease.

According to the May 2000 issue of the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, pomegranate juice consumption decreased the accumulation of LDL ("bad") cholesterol in the arteries of healthy, nonsmoking men by 20 percent. In mice, pomegranate juice reduced oxidation of LDL by 90 percent, and shrank plaque-ridden lesions in the mice by 44 percent.

Similar studies at the Technion-Israel Institute of Technology found that healthy subjects who drank 2-3 ounces of pomegranate juice a day for two weeks reduced the cholesterol oxidation process by as much as 40 percent. This is critical, as this process often creates plaque build up that narrows arteries and results in heart disease.

Meanwhile, the ellagic acid in pomegranates helps protect you from many types of cancer. A research study at the University of South Carolina's Hollings Cancer Institute found that "ellagic acid stops cancer cells from dividing in 48 hours, prevents the destruction of the p53 gene that leads to cancer, and causes normal cell death within 72 hours in cases of breast, pancreas, esophageal, skin, colon, and prostate cancers."

Similarly, researchers in Japan showed that pomegranate extracts will cause leukemia cells to revert back to their normal non-cancerous identities.

Cherries and Berries—Nature's Candies

Forget chocolate and jellybeans. Cherries and berries are the only candy you'll ever need. Not only are they sweet and delicious, but can also help prevent or relieve a wide variety of health complaints. From antioxidants that fight cancer and heart disease, to bioflavonoids and minerals essential for energy and good bones, the nutrients in cherries and berries benefit your whole body—and come in a sweet, attractive, richly-textured package.

Cherries specifically are packed with antioxidants, anthocyanins, and bioflavonoids. They have been shown to lower blood uric levels an average of 15 percent. (High blood uric levels are associated with increased risk of heart attack and stroke.)

Similarly, a 1996 study published in the *Annals of Internal Medicine* reported that the flavonoids found in cherries and other purple-colored berries,

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Developing
Healthy Habits
A NEWSLETTER WITH YOUR HEALTH IN MIND

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such as raspberries and blueberries, could actually reduce the risk of death from heart attack in middle-aged men with coronary artery disease.

Plus, blueberries have earned top health status all on their own. Not only are they incredibly high in antioxidants, but they've been shown to help improve memory and motor function, guard against Alzheimer's disease, and even help to protect your vision. Blueberries are also your heart-health allies, helping to reduce LDL ("bad") cholesterol build-up, as well as prevent cardiovascular disease and stroke.

Polynesian Powerhouse

Who would have guessed that a tart, cranberry-sized berry could offer life-sustaining health benefits? Anyone who's studied the amazing goji berry!

While there are more than 40 different variety of goji berries throughout the globe, the original Himalayan goji berry is considered to be the most potent variety—and the most nutritionally dense. The goji contains the four most important polysaccharides, as well as 19 amino acids, 21 trace minerals, a complete spectrum of antioxidant carotenoids, lutein, more vitamin C than oranges, B vitamins, and vitamin E (which is very rare for a fruit). It is particularly good for your heart and eyesight.

Amazing Aloe Vera

The hearty and beautiful aloe vera plant is most commonly known for treating minor burns with its cooling gel. But did you know that it also helps your body maintain a first-class defense system?

A 1996 study published in *Lancet* found that oligosaccharides—substances that your body produces from the saccharides found in aloe vera—were proven effective against a broad range of bacteria, including *E. coli*, *Bordetella pertussis* (responsible for whooping cough), *S. pneumoniae* (a cause of pneumonia), and *H. pylori* (the cause of some peptic ulcers). Plus, the oligosaccharides help prevent infection-causing microbes from colonizing in your bladder, upper respiratory tract, and other vulnerable spots. Other studies have confirmed this antibacterial power, as

well as power against viruses and fungi.

And that's the just one part of aloe's health benefits. This versatile plant may also improve the digestion and assimilation of dietary protein, and assist in the healing of peptic ulcers. This is likely due to its soothing properties, its suppression of the enzyme pepsin when the stomach is empty, and its power against ulcer-causing *H. pylori*.

But wait, there's more. Aloe has also been associated with rapid and significant improvements in blood sugar control, as well as significant improvements in blood triglyceride levels, which suggests that the succulent may also help to lower your risk for the cardiovascular disease that so often accompanies type-2 diabetes.



Take a Bite Out of Life

The best part about these spectacular healthy fruits and plants is that they are also delicious! If you choose, you can eat the fruits whole, especially pomegranate, cherries, and berries. With the goji berries, buy them dried and add to salads, yogurt, or oatmeal for a tasty antioxidant boost.

With aloe vera, your best consumption bet is to drink the juice (not gel). I've found that mixing two tablespoons of aloe vera juice and two tablespoons of either pomegranate, cherry, or blueberry juice in eight to 10 ounces of mineral water is an easy, fantastic way to enjoy all of these health benefits at once. So raise a glass and drink to your health!

Bio:

Kimberly Day has written for several health newsletters and magazines, and is currently working with Dr. Susan Lark on a series of books on women's health. Additionally, she is working on a sugar-free ice cream cookbook, and pens a free food eLetter entitled *Food for Thought: Quaffs and Cuisine for Decadent Health*. If you have any questions or would like to be added to her eLetter list, email her at writing4days@yahoo.com

CLA *Tipping the Scales Back in Your Favor*

By: Julia Craven

It happens to every single one of us - as our years add up, so do the numbers on the bathroom scale . . . and few of us appreciate this particular gift of age. A couple of years ago I found myself facing this dilemma. I had been working in the natural foods industry for many years. I knew all the tricks of the trade: the diets, the exercise programs and, I thought, all the supplements. Over a period of a few weeks I heard several people make mention of CLA. It was just about the only thing I hadn't tried to take off those extra pounds. I did some research and, after determining it was safe, I decided to give it a try.


CLA stands for Conjugated Linoleic Acid. It is a polyunsaturated essential fatty acid that cannot be manufactured by our bodies. Until very recently CLA was present in our food supply because it is plentiful in dairy and beef fats from animals that have been grass fed. With the advent of industrial farming the livestock was switched to a less expensive grain based diet, mostly corn. This alteration to the livestock's natural grass grazing tendencies changes the fatty acid profile of the meat and dairy. It is estimated that grass fed animals have three to five times more CLA and over sixty percent more omega three fatty acids than their grain fed counterparts. Dairy fats in their raw state will also have enough of the enzyme lipase in them to assist the body to make use of the nutrient dense fats. When the lipase enzymes are denatured from pasteurization, CLA is diminished, and the omega three to six ratio is out of balance. Fats that were at one time nourishing have now become fats that are difficult for our bodies to use and they tend to accumulate.

Bio:

Since 1989 Julia Craven has been dedicated to educating the public about natural strategies for a healthier life. In addition to years of self study and apprenticeships in nutrition, supplements, and traditional herbal medicine, Julia is an expert in the field of enzyme therapy. She is currently a National Educator for Enzymedica.

A double-blind, randomized, placebo-controlled study, published in the December 2000 issue of the *Journal of Nutrition* found that supplemental CLA reduces body fat and preserves muscle tissue when used at a dosage of approximately 3.4 grams per day. Dr. Micheal Pariza conducted further studies on CLA at the University of Wisconsin and he concluded, "It doesn't make a big fat cell little. What it rather does is keep a little fat cell from getting big." His research showed that when dieters stopped dieting they were more likely to gain muscle back instead of fat.

Typically individuals combining CLA with a healthy weight reduction plan notice a loss in inches prior to that of pounds. Although we love to see that number on the bathroom scale decrease, inch loss is preferable. Lean muscle weighs more than fat and also requires more calories for fuel. Anything we can do to maintain muscle mass will serve to stoke our metabolic fires over the long run.

So, how did CLA work for me? The combination of moderate exercise, healthy food choices, and consistent use of CLA and lipase enzymes helped me lose approximately 25 pounds over the course of a year. I did not diet, embark on an extreme exercise regime or make any drastic changes. CLA was the missing nutrient I needed to tip the scale back in my favor. A simple change produced great results! 



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