



Cranberries in Family Practice

A team of Wayne State University Medical School physicians published the results of their research on cranberries and urinary tract infections (UTIs) in the February 2003 issue of the *Journal of Family Practice*.¹ Led by Dr. Raphael Kiel, they found that cranberry juice (200 mL daily to 250 mL three times daily) and cranberry concentrate tablets (at least 1:30 parts concentrated juice twice daily) both reduce recurrent, symptomatic UTIs in women by 12 to 20 percent in comparison with the placebo.

¹ *J Fam Pract*, 2003 Feb; 52(2):154-5.

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National Institutes of Health Rolls Out Cranberry Initiative

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) recently announced a \$2.6 million initiative to support basic and clinical research on the role of cranberry in the prevention and treatment of urinary tract infections (UTIs) and other conditions for which there exists credible evidence for efficacy. Products of primary interest include cranberry juice cocktail and encapsulated powders.

Evidence from previous research studies points to the cranberry's ability to protect against UTIs and other conditions, such as gum disease and some ulcers, by preventing bacteria from adhering to the cell wall. Now, the NIH seeks to build upon that foundation to determine appropriate forms of cranberry products, precise dosage levels, duration of these treatments and more information about the cranberry's mechanism of action.

Another landmark aspect of the research that flows out of this initiative will be the usage of standardized research-grade cranberry products and matching placebos developed in National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine-funded projects for the purposes of this initiative.

For recommended potential research directions, award mechanisms, available funds, eligible institutions and individual principal investigators, additional requirements, and contact information for inquiries and submissions, please view the request for applications on the NIH Web site at the address below. With applications due on May 20, 2003, the NIH anticipates the review period to extend through the fall of 2003 with projects starting as early as December 1, 2003.

Fast Facts:

- UTIs account for seven million office visits and another one million emergency department visits each year.
- UTIs result in 100,000 hospitalizations annually.
- One woman in five develops a UTI during her lifetime.
- Nearly 20 percent of women who have a UTI will develop another, and 30 percent of those women will have yet another UTI.

Quick Links:

NIH Request for Applications:

<http://grant.nih.gov/grants/guide/rfa-files/RFA-AT-03-004.html>

NCCAM-supported research-grade cranberry products:

http://rcb.cancer.gov/rcb-internet/appl/rfp/21011-06.htm#P2192_161418

Calendar of Events

Experimental Biology 2003: Translating the Genome, April 11-15, 2003, San Diego, CA. For more information, visit <http://www.faseb.org/meetings/eb2003/>

American College For Advancement in Medicine: Spring Conference, May 14-18, 2003, Washington, DC. For more information, visit www.acam.org

American Aging Association 2003 Annual Conference: Nutritional Modulation of Aging and Age-Related Diseases, June 6-9, 2003, Baltimore, MD. For more information, visit www.americanaging.org

American Dietetic Association 2003 Food & Nutrition Conference & Expo, October 25-28, 2003, San Antonio, TX. For more information, visit <http://www.eatright.org/function/2003.html>

Benefits Come in a Variety of Forms

The illustrations below show equivalent amounts of cranberry products that provide round-the-clock protection from urinary tract infections (UTIs) – as well as gum disease and some ulcers – when consumed daily.



Juice

10 oz. of 27%
juice cocktail

=



Fresh

1 ½ cups fresh
or frozen

=



Dried

1 oz. sweetened

=



Sauce

½ cup

Cranberry Health Web Chat Recap

The Cranberry Institute (CI) recently hosted its first online chat, in which health professionals queried the CI's Science Advisor, Dr. Martin Starr. If you took part in the chat, we hope you enjoyed the lively exchange of ideas. We've also included a few highlights from the discussion here.

Question: I am often asked about cranberry health benefits. What do you think is the greatest health benefit you can obtain from eating cranberries?

Dr. Starr: I'm going to say its ability to clean the body of possible pathogenic bacteria, kind of a "cran flush," if you will. That's what is relatively unique about the cranberry. After that, I like its antioxidant properties. It's a one-two, high-intensity natural health punch.

Question: I have a client with primary biliary cirrhosis (PBC) who had her first bladder infection in 20 years about six months ago. She decided, on her own, to take 1000 mg cranberry concentrate per day. What do you think? My main concern is her liver is overtaxed as it is with all the medications.

Dr. Starr: There is some good data on the efficacy of the capsules in helping prevent urinary tract infections (UTIs), or at least reduce the severity. [Keep in mind] that the products could well vary in the cranberry content.

Question: As I'm trying to normalize her eating habits and attitude to health, I suggested only taking the supplements when she gets an infection again. I would rather she drank cranberry juice.

Dr. Starr: That is likely the most effective course to take.

Question: What's the latest on cranberry research?

Dr. Starr: The very latest has to do with some preliminary findings in the ear, nose and throat area. It appears from the early work that cranberry might have the ability to interfere with the adhesion in the body of the bacteria responsible, e.g. respiratory infections. [That would really] be something, especially with children. The dose response has not been worked out for that population yet, but based on adults, the effective levels appear to be 10-12 ounces per day.

Question: Dr. Starr, I'm interested in learning more about antibiotic resistance. How can a berry help combat the growing problem?

Dr. Starr: Recent research suggests the cranberry was effective in interfering with the adhesion of even antibiotic resistant bacteria. Greater usage of antibiotics leads to more and more resistance. So anything, like cranberry, that could be helpful in reducing or preventing infections could indirectly help reduce the global problem.