

RESEARCH: CRANBERRIES AND HUMAN HEALTH

Drinking Cranberry Juice Cocktail is Associated with Less Inflammation and Normal Weights!

Cranberry products, such as cranberry juice cocktail, are rich in polyphenolic compounds (i.e., flavonoids) and have been studied for their link to health benefits. Cranberries are naturally low in sugar and high in acid content; therefore, they are frequently sweetened for palatability. The final product, such as with cranberry juice cocktail, is one that contains similar or lower amounts of sugar than commonly consumed 100% juices. Despite the added sweetener, researchers have found that cranberry juice cocktail has several health benefits. Recently, a cross-sectional study found that U.S. adults who consume cranberry juice cocktail had statistically significant lower levels of C-reactive protein, an indicator of inflammation, compared to those that did not drink cranberry juice cocktail. Cranberry juice cocktail drinkers also trended toward lower weight and waist circumference, BMI levels, fasting glucose, insulin, total cholesterol and triglyceride levels. This research indicates that drinking cranberry juice cocktail was associated with healthier anthropometric measures and less indication of inflammation. Although more research is warranted to validate these findings, drinking cranberry juice cocktail was not associated with higher weight, increased likelihood for being overweight or obese or a higher total energy intake compared to non-consumers.

Reference: Duffey, KJ, Sutherland, LA. Adult consumers of cranberry juice cocktail have lower C-reactive protein levels compared with nonconsumers. *Nutr Res.* 2015 Feb;35(2):118-26. doi: 10.1016/j.nutres.2014.11.005. Epub 2014 Dec 3.

Urinary Tract Health? Extract or Juice – Take Your Pick!

While research has shown that the unique A-type proanthocyanidins (PACs) in cranberries help prevent the adhesion of bacteria to the urinary tract, the effect of various forms of cranberries – powders, extracts and beverage formulations – has not been delineated. In addition, both scientists and industry want to know if a standardized extract that delivers a consistent amount of PACs will provide similar benefits as traditional cranberry juice. Researchers from the Marucci Center for Blueberry Cranberry Research at Rutgers University, in partnership with scientists from Ocean Spray Cranberries, Inc., explored these issues by conducting a pilot study and clinical trial to assess the *ex vivo* urinary anti-adhesion activity of Cranberry Extract Beverage, Cranberry Extract and Juice Beverage, Low-calorie Cranberry Juice Cocktail and a placebo beverage. The researchers found that the anti-adhesion activity of cranberry beverages used in both trials showed higher activity compared to placebo, indicating that beverages made from cranberry extract and/or juice provide equivalent urinary anti-adhesion properties. As part of this conclusion statement, study authors also encourage future investigations to provide detailed analytical descriptions of the beverages, powders or extracts being tested so that a standardized, consistent dose of bioactive cranberry compounds may be delivered.

Reference: Kaspar KL, Howell AB, Khoo C. A randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled trial to assess the bacterial anti-adhesion effects of cranberry extract beverages. *Food Funct.* 2015 Feb 27. [Epub ahead of print]

CRANBERRY NEWS YOU CAN USE

Cranberry Health Research Library

- Visit the library [here](#) to find abstracts for nearly 400 research studies that focus on cranberry and various aspects of human health. Browse by year to find the most recent publications.

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans Committee Report *Forgot About Cranberries*

You may have read the recent 2015 Dietary Guidelines for Americans Committee Report. While the committee took a strong stance against sugar-sweetened beverages, the committee did not categorize cranberry juice cocktail as a sugar-sweetened beverage *nor* did they recognize it as an acceptable, healthy option alongside 100% juices. Because of this omission, the Cranberry Institute is

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concerned that, by default, cranberry juice cocktail will be regarded as no more than a “sugar-sweetened beverage” by the health community and consumers, despite the wealth of data to support its health-promoting qualities.

Cranberry Juice Cocktail – Not an Average Beverage

Due to its polyphenolic content, cranberry juice cocktail is not an average beverage. Cranberries, and cranberry juice cocktail, contain powerful nutrients called PACs (proanthocyanidins) that give cranberries their distinct tart taste. Because of the tartness, cranberry juice is diluted to 27% with added sweetener to make cranberry juice cocktail. This formulation has been found to be the most acceptable to consumers and has been used in many of the studies investigating the health benefits of consuming cranberries. Research has shown that drinking cranberry juice cocktail daily can promote urinary tract health, providing protection against certain harmful bacteria that cause urinary tract infections. This is especially important, as decreasing the recurrence of urinary tract infections remains an important public health concern because finding a non-drug remedy could lower the use of antibiotic treatment and the consequent development of resistance to these drugs. In addition, cranberry consumption may play a role in helping to maintain the health of the cardiovascular system, bones, teeth and immune system.

A Little Sweetener, A Lot of Nutrition

Unlike most fruits, and quite similar to a lemon or lime, cranberries are naturally low in sugar and high in acid, so cranberry foods and beverages need to be sweetened in order to be palatable. The good news is that sugar does not diminish the health benefits of the cranberry and the resulting juice has similar or less sugar than many 100% juices. The American Academy of Pediatrics recognizes that the addition of small amounts of sugar (among other nutrients, such as fat and sodium) can enhance the enjoyment and consumption of highly nutritious foods (2015 position on: Snacks, Sweetened Beverages, Added Sugars, and Schools). And, the FDA acknowledged on March 3, 2014 that nutrient-dense foods may have “added sugars.” In the FDA Federal Register, Vol. 49, it stated, “We recognize that small amounts of added sugars can increase the palatability of nutrient-dense foods.” The USDA agrees – their Interim Final Rule for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program: Nutrition Standards for All Foods Sold in School as Required by the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 stated, “We support an exemption for dried fruits with added nutritive sweeteners when the added sweeteners are required for the processing or palatability of the product, such as dried cranberries, tart cherries or blueberries.”

The Cranberry Institute Comments

In response to the omission of cranberry juice cocktail, the Cranberry Institute will present the evidence in a comment to the Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Secretary, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health; and U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food, Nutrition and Consumer Services and Research, Education, and Economics.

If you're interested in expressing your point of view on cranberry juice cocktail as the final 2015 Dietary Guidelines for Americans are constructed, you can do so until May 8, 2015. If you'd like help from the Cranberry Institute, please email Executive Director Terry Humfeld at thumfeld@cranberryinstitute.org. [Here](#) is a link to the public comment section.

MEET THE CRANBERRY BOG BLOGGER

Jen Haugen, RDN, LD, the Down-to-Earth Dietitian, was one of the CI's very first Cranberry Bog Bloggers and is an avid fan of cranberries. She says, “I especially love how they work to inhibit the growth of bacteria in the mouth, stomach and urinary tract. No matter which way I use them, they are hit in any recipe!” You can read one of her Cranberry Bog Blogger posts [here](#).



Jen is a Minnesota-based dietitian who works as a school nutrition dietitian and an online nutrition communicator. She is also a writer and recipe developer. Jen combines her love of her family, faith and food on her Down-to-Earth Dietitian website, jenhaugen.com. You can also find her on Facebook at [Jen Haugen RD](#) and on Twitter [@jenhaugen](#).

Are you a Registered Dietitian with a blog? If you'd like to become a Cranberry Bog Blogger and receive additional cranberry health information, recipes and usage ideas to share with your readers, email sbaber@pollock-pr.com for more information.

Cooking with Cranberries

As we gear up for summer, add the following cranberry combinations to your favorite greens for a fresh salad worthy of any barbecue or picnic.

- Dried cranberries, garbanzo beans and carrots
- Dried cranberries, orange slices and chopped broccoli
- Dried cranberries, cucumbers and feta cheese
- Dried cranberries, green peppers and black beans
- Dried cranberries, black beans and corn kernels
- Dried cranberries, chopped pears and celery

One of our favorite cranberry salad recipes is a [Cranberry Spinach Salad with Avocados](#), which combines the tangy tartness of cranberries with the richness of avocado and the freshness of spinach and frisée.

Yield: 4 servings

Dressing Ingredients

- 4 Tbsp. cranberry juice
- 2 Tbsp. dried cranberries
- 2 Tbsp. white wine vinegar or rice vinegar
- 2 tsp. Dijon mustard
- 6 Tbsp. canola oil
- Salt and pepper, to taste

Salad Ingredients

- 3 ¹/₃ cups fresh spinach leaves
- 1 small head of frisée lettuce
- 1 ripe avocado, peeled, pitted and sliced
- 1 small red onion, thinly sliced



Directions

Dressing

- Place cranberry juice and dried cranberries in a small pot and bring to a boil. Remove from heat and allow to cool. Stir in vinegar and Dijon mustard. Gradually whisk in canola oil so the mixture becomes a dressing. Season with salt and pepper, to taste.

Salad

- Rinse spinach and frisée; spin dry. Remove thick stems and cut larger leaves into bite-size pieces. Add avocado and onion slices.
- Gently toss salad ingredients with the dressing and serve.

Tip: If preparing in advance, sprinkle avocado slices with lemon juice to prevent discoloration. Mix the salad ingredients with the dressing just before serving to keep the leaves fresh and crisp.

Nutrition Information Per Serving*: Calories 320, Calories from Fat 250, Saturated Fat 2.5g, Trans Fat 0g, Total Fat 29g, Cholesterol 0mg, Sodium 125mg, Total Carbohydrate 18g, Sugars 6g, Dietary Fiber 9g, Protein 3g, Vitamin A 70%, Vitamin C 35%, Calcium 10%, Iron 10%

**Excludes Salt and Pepper*

Recipe courtesy of the Cranberry Marketing Committee

