

ABIPA – ASHEVILLE BUNCOMBE INSTITUTE OF PARITY ACHIEVEMENT

Red, White, and Blueberries

By JéWana Grier-McEachin, Executive Director

When we think of July it is natural to think about red, white, and blue, cookouts, family time, and summer fun.

July has just a few dedicated national health and wellness observances, one of which is National Blueberry Month. As we slide into the second half of the year, July is a perfect time to focus on seasonal healthy eating.

The Centers for Disease Control suggests you get five fruits and vegetables a day, but why limit yourself? While availability is fresh and local, visit farmer's markets to enjoy your favorites and try new fresh fruits and vegetables. Make time to explore local farms, roadside stands, farm stands, or find the perfect spot to go berry picking.

Locally, wild blueberries are ripe for the picking along the Blue Ridge Parkway toward the end of August into early Fall, making a great end-of-summer family outing. The most popular spots include Craggy Gardens (Milepost 364), Graveyard Fields (MP 418), and Black Balsam Knob (MP 420).



A one-cup serving of blueberries contains:

- Fiber.....3.6 grams
- Vitamin C.....16% of the Daily Value (DV)
- Vitamin K.....24% of the DV
- Manganese.....22% of the DV
- Small amounts of various other nutrients

Do you remember the saying, "The darker the berry, the sweeter the juice?" Blueberries are not just sweet, they are also power packed. At about eight calories a cup, these little berries pack a nutritional wallop. Here are 10 things you should know about the little blueberry.

1 Blueberries are among the most nutrient-dense berries. They are also about 85% water. An entire cup contains only 84 calories, with 21.5 grams of carbohydrates.



JéWana Grier-McEachin. Photo: Pro16 Productions

2 Blueberries may have the highest antioxidant capacity of all the popular fruits and vegetables. Flavonoids appear to be the berries' antioxidant with the greatest impact.

3 Blueberries reduce DNA damage, which may help protect against aging and cancer. Because blueberries are high in antioxidants, they can neutralize some of the free radicals that damage your DNA.

4 The antioxidants in blueberries have been shown to reduce a predominant risk factor for heart disease by preventing oxidative damage to "bad" LDL cholesterol.

5 Regular blueberry intake is tied to lower blood pressure in numerous studies.

6 Some evidence indicates that eating fruits rich in anthocyanins, such as blueberries, is associated with a reduced risk of heart attacks.

7 The antioxidants in blueberries seem to benefit your brain by aiding brain function and delaying mental decline.

8 Several studies demonstrate that blueberries have anti-diabetes effects, improving insulin sensitivity and lowering blood sugar levels.

9 Blueberries may help fight urinary tract infections. Like cranberries, blueberries contain substances that can prevent certain bacteria from binding to the wall of your bladder. More research is needed to find out if blueberries can help prevent UTIs.

10 Blueberries may reduce muscle damage after strenuous exercise. Blueberry supplements may lessen the damage that occurs at a molecular level, minimizing soreness and reduced muscle performance. In a small study of ten female athletes, blueberries accelerated muscle recovery.

I've known about the power of blueberries because my father ate them when he was fighting cancer. However, I think I just might integrate a few more of these power berries into my wellness routine. Hopefully you will too!

Source: www.healthline.com/nutrition/10-proven-benefits-of-blueberries.



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Kelly White, MHE, MPH. Photo: Pro16 Productions

The "Sugar" and Your Eyes

by Kelly White, MHE, MPH, ABIPA Health Education Program Manager

A diagnosis of prediabetes is almost like being given a second chance to change your lifestyle.

Avoid getting diabetes which could bring on a wealth of problems from head to toe. Recently a family member told me about how he had a total loss of vision before finding out that his glucose level was well in the hundreds before being diagnosed with type II diabetes.

One of the problems with untreated diabetes includes trouble with the eyes. If not taken care of, it could cause someone to lose total vision, and for some, a lot of irreversible nerve damage.

Because July is healthy vision month, we want to focus on the need to take care of your eyes. Keeping your eyes healthy includes getting a yearly eye exam to make sure the nerves in your eyes are still functioning as they should. If you are a diabetic, this exam should include getting checked for diabetic retinopathy, a condition that affects the nerves in the eyes which could lead to vision loss or blindness.

Seeing your eyecare professional once a year is not the only way to take care of your eyes; having a healthy life-

style helps to protect us as well. Also, the more we know about our family's health and genetics can play a role in knowing what risk factors we face.

The National Eye Institute also suggests that we follow these simple eye care tips to keep our eyes healthy.

- Follow the 20/20/20 trick by looking away from your computer screen to a point about 20 feet away, for 20 seconds, every 20 minutes to prevent eye fatigue.
- Eat lots of leafy green vegetables, and don't forget the omega 3's, like salmon, tuna, and halibut.
- Lastly, try to get as much physical activity as you can! As a precaution, always be sure to speak with your healthcare provider before doing any exercise beyond your normal activities of daily living.

These are great tips you can use to not only take care of your eyes, but also manage your diabetes at the same time!

Source: National Eye Institute

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50 The 20 ABIPA Summer Gift

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