

[IMAGE]

Shedding Light On the Benefits of Dark Foods

By Staff Editorial

You probably already know that consuming whole grains, legumes, berries and certain teas arms your body with powerful antioxidants and other disease-fighting agents. But do you know that the darker the pigment in these foods, the more benefits they may provide? Research indicates that choosing darker foods over foods lighter in color can help maximize your defense against cancer and other diseases; so include the following foods as part of a balanced diet:

Black rice: Brown rice is better for you than white rice, but black rice is an even better option when it comes to disease prevention. The *anthocyanin* content is thought to be higher in black rice than in brown rice. (Anthocyanins are water-soluble pigments; they belong to the class of molecules called *flavonoids*, which are known for their antioxidant activity.) Along with this deeper color comes protection against cardiovascular disease and lower levels of C-reactive protein (an indicator of inflammation) in the blood, according to a study conducted in China.

- Copyright © Stock Photo / Register Mark **Black beans:** Beans are a great source of fiber, but that's not all. Research shows that the skin of the black bean contains numerous plant compounds (terpenoids and flavonoids) that help block the growth of colon, liver and breast cancer cells.

Blackberries: Researchers at the University of Kentucky credit the compounds found in blackberry extract with halting the growth of colon cancer cells. And just like black rice, blackberries may lower levels of C-reactive protein, preventing diseases associated with chronic inflammation.

Black tea: Similar to green tea, black tea contains powerful antioxidants. Research shows that the properties specific to the flavonoid-rich black tea provide protection from heart disease, neurological decline and cancer.

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