

[IMAGE]

Cranberries for Cancer

For centuries, cranberries have been used as a type of folk medicine to fight off urinary tract infections and other ailments. Previous research has shown that extracts taken from cranberries may fight certain types of cancer, but without noting which ingredients in the extracts may be responsible for the effect. A new laboratory-based study has identified those ingredients, which appear to be effective in stopping both the growth and spread of a wide range of cancers, without affecting any healthy cells.

In the study, researchers isolated a group of chemicals called proanthocyanidins from a cranberry extract and tested them on eight types of cancer tumor cell lines. When the cells were analyzed, "significant inhibition" was seen in the production of human lung, colon and leukemia tumor cells. The chemicals also prevented the tumor cells from growing.

Because the study was conducted in vitro (i.e., in an artificial environment), the scientists were unable to determine how many cranberries (or cranberry supplements) a person should consume to have the same effect as the extract. However, the study's lead author suggested that increased cranberry consumption could be helpful, adding that the berries contain several types of antioxidants, all of which could help protect against cancer. For more information on foods that contain proanthocyanidins and may reduce the risk of cancer and other diseases, visit www.chiroweb.com/find/archives/nutrition.

Neto CC, Krueger CG, Lamoureaux TL, et al. MALDI-TOF MS characterization of proanthocyanidins from cranberry fruit (*Vaccinium macrocarpon*) that inhibit tumor cell growth and matrix metalloproteinase expression in vitro. *Journal of the Science of Food and Agriculture*. Early view, published Oct. 17, 2005.

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