

The Health Benefits of Cherries:

Cherry Blossoms are so beautiful, but the most delightful quality about this fruit is the nutritional benefits that it provides for all of us to enjoy. It is explosive – a real Super Fruit. We tried them all, canned, sour, sweet, frozen, or dried. I thought you would enjoy discovering what we found out. Some researchers advise to limit candied maraschino cherries because they contain extra sugar and fewer beneficial cherry pigments. I found the dried tart cherries and natural frozen sweet cherries were excellent sources to use for my recipes.

As I grabbed my bag of dried tart cherries, I didn't even realize as I popped a handful in my mouth that I actually was guaranteeing myself a sound sleep that evening. According to Glen Howatson, Ph.D., "The melatonin in tart cherry juice is very well absorbed and is utilized by the body to provide an effect that could rival melatonin supplements." It lowers the body temperature and makes us sleepy.

Benefit: Helps you get a good night's sleep.

Now what about those sweet cherries? Did you know that they are just loaded with potassium, which is a natural blood pressure reducer? It balances the effects of sodium and boasts an antioxidant quercetin that may keep blood vessels relaxed.

Benefit: Helps to balance your blood pressure and lower the risk of heart disease

How many times do you feel a little workout pain after you exercise or stress those muscles? Well, tart cherry juice might be your medicine.

A 2010 *Journal of the International Society of Sports Nutrition* study supported the idea that antioxidants protect against attacks by exercise-induced free radicals, which can lead to painful inflammation.

Benefit: Ease sore muscles

I love to use the sweet taste of dark cherries to create desserts and even make into a main dish topping. What I didn't realize was that they are rich in beta carotene, vitamin C, anthocyanins and quercetin that may prevent genetic mutations that can lead to cancer and keep those cells from growing out of control according to an article by Karen Ansel M.S. R.D. One thing to remember is to make sure those cherries are dark as that fruit has more antioxidants.

Benefit: Helps the body fight against cancer

If that's not enough evidence to persuade you to reach for that bowl of cherries, consider that the anthocyanins in tart cherries activate a molecule that helps rev up fat burning and decrease fat storage. Now that's good news!

Benefit: Control that weight.

There is a form of arthritis that is caused by too much uric acid in the blood. The result is lots of swelling, inflammation, and tenderness. Adding cherries to your diet can greatly decrease the intense pain associated with those ailments. A USDA study, eating about 2 cups fresh sweet Bing cherries daily lowered uric acid levels by 15% and also

reduced C-reactive protein, a marker of inflammation. Another study showed that drinking 8 ounces of tart cherry juice a day reduces uric acid.

Benefit: Control Gout and forms of arthritis

http://www.eatingwell.com/nutrition_health/nutrition_news_information/cherry_nutrition_benefits

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