



Choose berries for burst of nutrition

I love buying and eating fresh berries this time of year. Are there any that are more nutritious than others, or are they all just about the same?

Any berry is a great choice as a snack, dessert, or to add to cereal, salad and other dishes.

In fact, a few years ago, blueberries, blackberries, strawberries and raspberries were all among the top 10 antioxidant-containing fruits in a list developed by the Tufts University Human Nutrition Research Center on Aging. Blueberries are among the Mayo Clinic's top 10 healthiest foods, and the National Cancer Institute touts raspberries, particularly black raspberries, because of their high levels of cancer-fighting anthocyanins.

No matter what kind of berries you choose, you'll be making a good choice towards the 1.5 to 2 cups of fruit a day recommended for most people. Here are some details on four of the most commonly enjoyed berries:

- Strawberries. A half-cup of raw strawberries has just 25 calories, and you get about 1.5 grams of fiber, 75 percent of the vitamin C you need and 15 percent of the manganese you need in a day. Strawberries are also a good source of folate and potassium.

Ripe strawberries should be fully red with a bright luster, and the caps should be bright green. Smaller strawberries usually have more flavor than larger ones.

- Blueberries. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Nutrient Database, a half-cup of raw

blueberries has just 42 calories, but offers 2 grams of fiber, 12 percent of the vitamin C you need each day, and 18 percent of the daily dose of vitamin K. Blueberries are also a good source of manganese, offering about 12 percent of the daily recommendation.

Choose blueberries that are plump, firm and dark blue with a waxy, silvery bloom.

- Raspberries. A half-cup of raw raspberries has 32 calories and offers 4 grams of fiber. It gives you 27 percent of the vitamin C you need in a day, and 20 percent of the manganese. Raspberries are also a good source of vitamin K and magnesium.

Ripe raspberries should be large, bright, firm, shiny, and uniform in color.

- Blackberries. A half-cup of raw blackberries has 31 calories and four grams of fiber. Like the other berries, blackberries are a very good source of vitamin C (25 percent of the daily recommendation), vitamin K (18 percent), and manganese (24 percent). In addition, blackberries are a good source of vitamin E, folate, magnesium, potassium and copper.

Upon ripening, blackberries become dull black and will just begin to soften.

All berries are fragile; handle them carefully and refrigerate them immediately after purchase. Rinse gently just before consuming -- and enjoy!

Chow Line is a service of Ohio State University Extension and the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center. Send questions to Chow Line, c/o Martha Filipic, 2021 Coffey Road, Columbus, OH, 43210-1044, or filipic.3@cfaes.osu.edu.



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