



For Immediate Release
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New research indicates daily consumption of wild blueberries improves blood pressure and blood vessel function

--Anthocyanin-Rich wild blueberries improved blood vessel function better than straight anthocyanins--

PORTLAND, Maine. March 6, 2019— New research suggests that the daily consumption of wild blueberries can positively impact blood vessel function and systolic blood pressure. A series of projects that involved researchers at eight universities focused on wild blueberries and their cardiovascular benefits. Results were described in a report entitled *Circulating Anthocyanin Metabolites Mediate Vascular Benefits of [Wild] Blueberries: Insights from Randomized Controlled Trials, Metabolomics and Nutrigenomics* which was published this week in [*The Journal of Gerontology: Series A*](#).

In one project, healthy males aged 18 to 70 years, consumed twice-daily a beverage containing wild blueberry powder for 28 days. Researchers measured two aspects of vascular function, namely blood pressure and endothelial function using flow-mediated dilation (FMD). FMD is a technique that models the capacity of blood vessels to respond through dilation to various conditions. The capacity for vasodilation and constriction is an important aspect of vascular function.

“This study not only confirmed our previous finding that wild blueberries induce improvement in FMD in healthy adults acutely, but we also observed sustained improvements in FMD and reductions in blood pressure with one month of daily consumption,” noted Dr. Ana Rodriguez-Mateos, head of the project’s lead research team and currently assistant professor at the Department of Nutritional Sciences, School of Life Course Sciences at King’s College London in the UK.

“The clinical relevance of this finding is underscored by the fact that the lowering of the blood pressure observed in our study is similar to what is commonly observed in clinical studies with blood pressure medication,” adds Ms. Rodriguez-Mateos.

The findings are also novel because the benefits were demonstrated in healthy individuals, whereas the effects of dietary flavonoids are often more readily detected in at-risk populations or in experimental models of stress. Improvements in the vascular performance of healthy volunteers suggests that these beneficial effects of wild blueberry may apply to a broader human population.

“These results add to the growing body of evidence supporting the benefits of wild blueberries in cardiovascular health. And, although we don’t yet know the entire story about what it is that makes wild blueberries so effective, the berry’s abundant anthocyanin pigments likely underpin much of their benefits in heart health and in other areas,” said Kit Broihier, MS, RD, LD, nutrition advisor to the Wild Blueberry Association of North America.

Anthocyanins benefit health – it’s the blue in wild blueberries

Anthocyanins are natural pigments that impart the blue, red, pink and purple colors to many berries, and other fruits and vegetables. Wild blueberries have the highest concentration of anthocyanins among commonly consumed berries, and 33 percent more per serving than regular cultivated blueberries.

A large amount of epidemiological evidence associates various health benefits with regular intake of very moderate amounts of anthocyanins. In these studies, where data is collected from large populations of adults for up to several decades, anthocyanin intake has been associated with a reduced risk of several health issues including cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, cognitive decline, systemic inflammation, and improved management of body weight.

In the present study, the wild blueberry beverage (delivering the equivalent of 1 ½ cups of berries) taken daily, imparted both immediate and long-term improvements in vascular function. In epidemiological studies, intake levels far lower than this have been associated with improved health outcomes. And, whereas here wild blueberries contributed to cardiovascular benefits through improved vascular function, they also benefit heart health in other ways, such as improved blood lipid profiles.

Also, of interest in this study is the fact that a whole berry treatment proved more effective at improving blood vessel function than a treatment of the berry anthocyanins alone. It is likely that other components in the berry added to the benefits of the abundant anthocyanins in the wild blueberries.

“While we know that the anthocyanins in wild blueberries play a part in their health-promoting potential, the fact that the whole berries outperformed pure anthocyanins shows that there are clearly other contributing components in the berries,” concluded Ms. Broihier.

This research was funded in part by the Wild Blueberry Association of North America.

About the Wild Blueberry Association of North America

The Wild Blueberry Association of North America (WBANA) is an international trade association of growers and processors of wild blueberries from Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland and Maine, dedicated to bringing the wild blueberry health story and unique wild advantages to consumers and the trade worldwide. For news, recipes, and related health information about wild blueberries visit www.wildblueberryassociation.ca or www.wildblueberries.com. For the latest updates, read the blog. Visit on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), or [Instagram](#).

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For more information, recipes, visuals or to schedule an interview or in-studio segment with Wild Blueberry Association of North America spokespeople [Wilhelmina Kalt](#), Ph.D or Kit Broihier, MS, RD, nutrition advisor, please contact Ruth Colapinto or Susan Willemsen at The Siren Group Inc. Tel: 416-461-5270. E-mail: ruth@thesirengroup.com or susan@thesirengroup.com. Visit: www.thesirengroup.com or on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) @thesirengroup.

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