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Nutrition News

Feeding the world with knowledge

Blueberries vs. PTSD

Blueberries May Benefit Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder



July is National Blueberry Month and we have so many reasons to celebrate! Already known for their role in brain function, bone health, and blood pressure management (not to mention great taste), research out of Louisiana State University finds blueberries may reduce depression and other symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

In laboratory research, scientists focused on a gene called SKA2. Abnormally low expression of this gene is linked to symptoms of PTSD including risk of suicide, meaning SKA2 could play a role in psychological well-being. Lab work suggests eating about two cups of blueberries per day may lead to increased expression of SKA2, which may ultimately help prevent negative consequences of PTSD.

Previous lab work by the same researchers found that blueberries may also affect levels of serotonin, a neurotransmitter linked with happiness. The next step for these researchers is to explore how these two beneficial effects could work together to relieve symptoms of PTSD.

Though it's too early to start prescribing blueberries as a proper treatment for PTSD, it's never a bad idea to add more berries to your diet. A 2012 study found blueberries may help put anyone in a good mood, possibly thanks to their vitamin C or anthocyanin content. Blueberries add naturally sweet flavor to smoothies, salads, whole wheat pancakes and more.

Cool down this summer with our [Banana Ice Cream Sandwiches](#) made with delicious DOLE® Blueberries and DOLE Bananas.

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Let's Party!

Tips for Summer Entertaining from Healthy-Living Experts



Summer is the season for outdoor entertaining, and while the weather may be hot, there's no reason to sweat over what to serve your guests. Keep things light and simple and make party time a breeze with tips, tricks and ideas from our healthy living experts.

Chef Mark Allison, Director of Culinary Nutrition at Dole:

"The traditional barbeque is always a summer entertaining option, but that means someone is stuck manning the grill. I keep things easy and casual with a DIY sandwich bar. Arrange sliced turkey, chicken and smoked salmon on one platter and vegetable toppings like lettuce, tomatoes, onions, pickles and

sliced peppers on another. Put out the condiments, toss some whole wheat buns in a basket, and you are ready to go! Guests can have fun creating their favorite sandwiches with all the trimmings. I'll also put out a few salads that I've made the day before: mixed greens, seasonal fruit, potato and whole wheat pasta salads are favorites. Finally, a large galvanized tub full of ice with a selection of cold drinks will round out a casual summer menu. Make summer entertaining easy and your party is sure to be a hit with family and friends."

Paulette Lambert, RD CDE, Director of Nutrition at California Health and Longevity Institute at the Four Seasons Westlake Village:

"Summer means quick, simple, delicious dinners off the grill made from the freshest food possible. I grill everything from little Gem romaine for a delectable salad to fresh. One food that hits the grill more than any other over the summer is chicken. One of my favorite ways to grill chicken is to pound skinless, boneless chicken breast or thighs, season with a variety of dry rubs or marinades such as a brush of olive oil, lemon, garlic, and crushed red pepper flakes. Thinly pounded chicken cooks in very few minutes and you get that smoky grilled flavor without over cooking or drying out the chicken. The increased surface area really makes each mouthful pop with flavor!"

Chef Amy Tobin, Culinary Director of the Event Center at the New Riff Distillery:

"Summertime and outdoor entertaining go hand in hand, yet fresh summer foods really don't like the heat. Little is a very big thing! Serving small portions of your favorite party foods ensures food stays fresh and beautiful from beginning to end. Keep extras of everything you're serving stashed in the fridge, making it easy to refresh as needed. Portion your favorite guacamole or spinach dip into smaller servings bowls so you can replace the old one when it becomes "past its prime." Instead of one big bowl of fruit salad, thread berries, pineapple and grapes on small wooden skewers and display on a tray with fresh mint and basil leaves. For dessert, tuck fresh strawberries dipped in dark chocolate into mini muffin papers. Display them on a cake stand and watch them disappear—everyone loves a little sweet treat."

Jenn LaVardera, MS RD, Registered Dietitian at Dole:

"I make sure plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables are on the menu whenever I host—everyone appreciates a healthy option. Keep produce exciting by preparing it on the grill. Grilled mushrooms, squash, eggplant, broccoli, carrots and cauliflower are hearty enough to make a vegetarian main dish, plus the colors look beautiful when displayed on a large platter. For dessert, try grilled bananas. Simply put unpeeled bananas on the grill for a few minutes per side. When the peel turns black, slit them open to reveal a sweet, custard-like filling. Add mini dark chocolate or peanut butter chips for a little extra fun."

Firing up the grill for your party? Try our [Grilled Bananas & Greens Salad](#) made with juicy blackberries, crunchy walnuts, and crisp Romaine lettuce.

Don't Drive, Get Fit

Cycling to Work May Benefit Health



If rush hour traffic isn't enough to make you reconsider your daily commute, perhaps your waistline will. A 2016 study published in *The Lancet Diabetes & Endocrinology* finds the more often you bike or walk to work, the healthier your weight will be.

Researchers from the UK polled about 300,000 adults aged 40-69 about their typical commute. Participants chose from driving, cycling, walking, or taking public transportation, or a combination of these choices. Researchers also measured participants' body fat and BMI.

Compared to the car-only commuters, bicycle-only commuters appeared the healthiest. The cyclists had a lower BMI by about 1.7 units, and an average 3.3% lower body fat. Participants who exclusively walked to work had a lower BMI by about 1 unit, and about 1.2% lower body fat compared to car-only commuters. People who used public transport had similar results to those who walked to work. Results suggest your body will become increasingly more fit when you commute outside of your car.

Driving a car is a fairly sedentary task, and this study gives momentum to the “[sitting is the new smoking](#)” movement. We aren't designed to sit all day. We sit at home, sit in the car, and sit at work. It's no surprise we have no energy for the gym after work; we convince our bodies to operate at lowest possible capacity all day long.

Conveniently sneak exercise into your day by making your commute your “gym time,” especially while nice summer weather is here. Bike, walk or take public transportation if you can. If it's simply too dangerous or too far, try biking for errands, adding more walks during the day, or taking the stairs in your office.

Need more incentive? Join the Dole Get Up and Grow!™ Together [Healthy Living Challenge](#) and get your coworkers, friends and family active too!

Watermelon for Women

Lycopene May Help Prevent Postmenopausal Osteoporosis



A juicy slice of watermelon is the perfect summertime snack, and with National Watermelon Day coming up on August 3 there's no better time to enjoy this succulent fruit. Already shown to aid in blood pressure management, post-exercise recovery, and stroke risk reduction, watermelon is now being considered particularly beneficial for older women thanks to the compound lycopene, according to a 2016 study published in the journal *Bone*.

Researchers from Saudi Arabia investigated the effects of lycopene on postmenopausal osteoporosis, an inflammatory condition that weakens bones and increases risk of bone fracture. Scientists fed female rats extra lycopene along with their usual diets for 12 weeks, finding lycopene helped to improve bone mass and strength while reducing bone deterioration.

There are a few possible explanations for lycopene's beneficial effect. Lycopene may help combat harmful oxidative stress that weakens bones, or it could be playing a direct role in bone metabolism. Either way, adding a few more lycopene-rich foods to your diet is a safe and natural way to keep your bones healthy.

Watermelon isn't the only delicious food that brings lycopene to the table. Tomatoes, red grapefruit, red guava and red papaya also contain the compound—lycopene is what gives these foods their beautiful red color! Make a tomato and basil salad, enjoy grapefruit with your breakfast, or add papaya to a smoothie. For a refreshing summertime salad, try [Watermelon and Shaved Ricotta Salata with Mint](#).

Add a Little More Pulse

Beans, Lentils, and Chickpeas May Aid in Weight Management



As declared by the United Nations, 2016 is the International Year of Pulses. Part of the legume family, the term “pulse” specifically refers to dried seeds including beans, dry peas, chickpeas, and lentils. These tiny nutrition powerhouses are high in fiber and protein and packed with vitamins and minerals. Need another reason to give pulses a chance? A 2016 meta-analysis published in the *American Society for Nutrition* finds a serving of pulses a day may aid in weight management.

Canadian researchers analyzed 21 scientific trials that studied the link between pulse consumption and weight management. Overall, people who ate one serving of pulses (132 grams, such as $\frac{2}{3}$ cup cooked lentils) per day for six weeks lost about one pound more weight than those who kept pulses off their plates. Six of those trials also showed that eating pulses led to reductions in body fat percentage. The best part is that these results were seen even when total calories were not intentionally reduced or restricted. No diet or starvation needed for weight loss here!

High fiber and protein content in pulses may be to thank for this effect. These properties help you feel fuller longer and keep your blood sugar stable, which ultimately helps with managing weight. Other health benefits of pulses may include lowering cholesterol and blood pressure.

This is an easy, tasty and affordable weight management solution. Incorporate pulses into one meal per day by adding them to salads, soups, side dishes, and more. These versatile seeds offer nutrient-dense, plant-based alternatives for meat and animal proteins. Try beans in tacos, chickpeas in pasta sauce, lentils in burgers, and dried peas in casseroles. These [Red Lentil “Burgers”](#) make a tasty meatless dinner.

BONUS: Looking for other vegetarian protein sources. Check out a few of our favorites in [Plant Protein Power!](#)

Get Doggone Healthy

Dog Walking Linked to Better Health in Older Adults



Are you low on fitness motivation? You may not need a personal trainer—just recruit your dog! According to a 2016 study from Miami University, dogs may really be “man’s best friend” when it comes to better health for older adults.

Using data from the 2012 Health and Retirement Study conducted by the University of Michigan, researchers studied the link between dog walking and health in 771 older adults. Not surprisingly, people who had greater attachment with their dog—that is, they thought of their dog as their friend—were more likely to walk their dog. Analysis showed people who walked their dogs were generally healthier—they had lower BMIs, fewer chronic conditions, and less frequent doctor visits.

Summer is the perfect time to get outside and get moving. Though having a dog of your own may help incentivize lacing up your sneakers for a walk, don’t worry if you don’t have a pet. Offer to walk your neighbor’s dog, round up a group of friends, or simply grab your iPod and enjoy some time on your own.

If you’re just starting out, ease in slowly and take a loop around the block or just go down the street and back. After a few days it will get easier and you will find that you can walk for longer.

FEATURED RECIPE

Banana Ice Cream Sandwiches

Ingredients:

- 4 DOLE® Bananas, peeled and frozen
- 16 graham crackers, prepared or homemade (see recipe below)
- 2 cups fresh DOLE Blueberries or chopped fresh DOLE Strawberries

Directions:

1. Press frozen bananas through Yonana® machine into cup. If you don’t have a Yonanas machine; peel, slice and freeze bananas for 2 hours. Place frozen banana slices in food processor or blender. Cover; blend until bananas become a creamy smooth custard.
2. Spoon 2 to 3 tablespoons of frozen banana custard onto 8 graham crackers. Press berries into frozen banana custard around all sides, top with remaining crackers. Freeze 5 minutes or store in airtight container until ready to serve.



Makes: 8 Servings

Prep Time: 20 minutes

Graham Crackers: Preheat oven to 350°F. Combine $\frac{3}{4}$ cup plus 2 tablespoons whole -wheat flour, $\frac{1}{3}$ cup all-purpose flour, 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon, $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon baking powder, $\frac{1}{8}$ teaspoon baking soda and $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt. Rub 3 tablespoons non-hydrogenated butter substitute into flour mixture until a coarse mixture. Stir in 3- $\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoons honey, 3 tablespoons plain yogurt and $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon vanilla extract until it forms dough. On lightly whole-wheat floured surface, roll into 12 x 6-inch rectangle, about $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch thick, place on baking sheet. Bake 15 minutes or until lightly crisp. Cut into sixteen 1- $\frac{1}{2}$ x 3-inch squares while warm.

EDITORIAL TEAM

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The material used as background for publications by the Dole Nutrition Institute (DNI) comes from peer reviewed medical literature, including basic laboratory studies and ongoing human clinical trials. Occasionally, we report on new discoveries, early-stage research of interest to the general public, acknowledging that such research is incomplete and findings are preliminary. The information from the DNI is not intended to replace expert advice, prescribed medications or treatment by a board certified medical doctor.

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