



Acai - Have You Heard?

Acai, a super-fruit packed with a number of vitamins, minerals and antioxidants, is receiving recognition and acclaim from a number of health food stores and alternative health care enthusiasts. Acai has even been featured on a number of television shows and news of all the benefits of acai have been broadcast internationally. But what do medical doctors have to say about acai? How healthy is this berry in all its forms, and how often should people use it?

Doctors say that you can receive the adequate amount of antioxidants per day by drinking a glass of red wine with dinner. However, the acai berry has 33 times more antioxidant power than red wine, so it's much more effective in helping the body to fight off free radicals, which are toxins in the air and environment that could damage the immune system. The high concentration of antioxidants in the acai berry also helps to combat premature aging.

Some doctors claim that the acai berry is one of the most nutritious foods in the world. It has been known to lower cholesterol levels in a number of individuals, reducing the risk of heart attacks and strokes in both men and women. It's also recommended that individuals drink acai juice to improve the lining of the digestive track, since it has a high fiber content. Consequently, acai consumption on a regular basis could help prevent colon cancer.

The American Heart Association doesn't recommend using antioxidant vitamin supplements until more complete data are available. We continue to recommend that people eat a variety of nutrient-rich foods daily from all the basic food groups.

Eating a variety of foods low in saturated fat, trans fat and cholesterol will provide a natural source of these vitamins, minerals and fiber.

Background

Oxidation of low-density lipoprotein (LDL or "bad") cholesterol is important in the development of fatty buildups in the arteries. This process, called atherosclerosis, can lead to heart attacks and strokes. Until recently, it was thought that LDL cholesterol lipoprotein oxidation and its biological effects could be prevented by using antioxidant supplements. However, more recent clinical trials have failed to demonstrate a beneficial effect of antioxidant supplements. Some studies even suggest that antioxidant supplement use could have harmful effects.

Using dietary supplements of antioxidants to prevent cardiovascular disease should not be recommended until their effect is proved in clinical trials that directly test their impact on CVD end points. Beneficial effects must be demonstrated in well designed (randomized, placebo-controlled) clinical trials before recommending widespread use to prevent cardiovascular disease.

At this time, the scientific evidence supports a diet high in food sources of antioxidants and other heart-protecting nutrients, such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains and nuts instead of antioxidant supplements to reduce risk of CVD.

Distributor Network

Ten Worst Foods

(Center for Science in the Public Interest)

1. Artery Crust



Judging by the label, Pepperidge Farm Roasted White Meat Chicken Premium Pot Pie has 510 calories

and 9 grams of saturated fat. But look again. Those numbers are for half a pie. Eat the entire pie, as most people probably do, and you're talking more than 1,000 calories and 18 grams of sat fat.

2. Strip Tease



For the very same reason, a Starbucks Caffè Mocha with whole milk and whipped cream is more than a mere cup of coffee. Think of it as a Quarter Pounder

with Cheese in a cup. Few people have room in their diets for the 450 calories and 13 grams of bad fat that this hefty beverage supplies. But you can lose all the bad fat and all but 170 calories if you order a tall (12 oz.) with nonfat milk and no whipped cream.

6. Angioplasta



"A fresh grilled chicken breast and fresh broccoli over pasta that's tossed with Parmesan cream sauce,"

says Ruby Tuesday's menu entry for its Chicken & Broccoli Pasta. Some diners may know that the cheese and cream sauce add saturated fat, but how much harm could they really do?

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Enough to turn the dish into a 1,700-calorie megameal — that's like swallowing two one-pound orders of BBQ baby back ribs.

7. Top Secret



Popcorn alone is a

good-for-you whole-grain snack...but not when Pop Secret gets hold of it. Pop Secret Movie Theater Butter Popcorn Snack Size Bags has 8 grams of bad fat in just one snack-size bag (6 cups popped). Instead, try Orville Redenbacher's Smart Pop or Smart Balance Smart 'N Healthy, both of which are made with no partially hydrogenated oils.

8. Salt's On!



Progresso Traditional, Vegetable Classics, and Rich & Hearty soups are brimming with salt. Half a can averages more than half of a person's daily quota of salt. Instead, try Progresso's Health Favorites reduced-sodium soups. All the flavor, but up to 50 percent less salt.

9. Tortilla Terror



Interested in a Chipotle Chicken Burrito (tortilla, rice, pinto beans, cheese,

chicken, sour cream, and salsa)? Think of its 1,040 calories and 16½ grams of saturated fat as *three* Subway Steak and Cheese 6-inch Subs. Plus, the burrito is loaded with 2,500 mg of sodium! Getting the burrito with no cheese or sour cream cuts the saturated fat to 3½ grams, but you still end up with 810 calories and 2,300 mg of sodium. Yikes!

10. Stone Cold



Into the



chocolate-dipped waffle bowl of a **Cold Stone Creamery Gotta Have It Founder's Favorite** goes, not just a 12-ounce, softball-sized mound of ice cream, but pecans, brownie pieces, fudge, and caramel. The tab: a startling 1,600 calories and 43 grams of saturated fat. That's roughly what you'd get if you polished off five single-scoop ice cream cones.