## **Berry Anthocyanins and Gut Health**

Digestive problems can affect the best of us at some point in our lives. In fact Mintel data shows that 86 per cent of all British adults have had some form of gastrointestinal problem or ailment over the course of a year.[[1]](#footnote-1) Now a new review published in the *Journal of Human Nutrition and Dietetics[[2]](#footnote-2)* has revealed that **consuming anthocyanins from foods such as berries could help health gut bacteria to flourish.**

Latest evidence shows that anthocyanins (plant-pigments that give fruits such as berries their distinct blue/red colouration) are metabolised in the gut. This, in turn, is thought to cause a shift in the type and amount of bacteria that are housed in the gut as well as having other potentially beneficial biological effects.

The latest review pooled evidence from six trials assessing links between anthocyanin intakes and gut microbiota populations. These were a combination of human, *in vitro* (test tube studies) and animal trials.

It was found that the consumption of anthocyanins helped *Bifidobacterium spp.* populations (the type that tends to be used in probiotics and for the treatment of irritable bowel syndrome) to flourish. In contrast, populations of less favourable *Clostridium histolyticum*, which has been found to be pathogenic in humans, were found to be inhibited.

**Dr Emma Derbyshire, Public Health Nutritionist and adviser to British Summer Fruits commented**; ~~-“~~These are very interesting and promising findings indicating that anthocyanins which are typically found in the skin of dark fruits such as berries have potential to give gut health a boost. These appear to give favourable gut bacteria a boost whilst offsetting unsavory gut bugs. This is exciting research though further clinical trials are now needed to see if similar effects can be replicated”

ENDS

**For editors:**

* The anthocyanin content of berries is:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Berry** | **Serving Size** | **mg/serving** |
| Blackberries | ½ cup | 70.4 |
| Blueberries | ½ cup | 120.8 |
| Raspberries | ½ cup | 30.2 |
| Strawberries | ½ cup | 20.5 |

USDA Database for the Flavonoid Content of Selected Foods.

* The colour/pigmentation of the fruit and vegetables that we eat could well be as important as the amount that we eat.

1. http://www.mintel.com/press-centre/beauty-and-personal-care/86-of-brits-have-suffered-from-a-gastrointestinal-problem-in-the-past-year [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. [Igwe EO](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/?term=Igwe%20EO%5BAuthor%5D&cauthor=true&cauthor_uid=29984532) et al. (2018) A systematic literature review of the effect of anthocyanins on gut microbiota populations. J Hum Nutr Diet. [Epub ahead of print]. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)