

Blueberry Booster – Great for Health and Fertility By Sue Bedford (MSc Nutritional Therapy)



A beautiful Blueberry and Orange Smoothie to start your day?

Blueberries both wild and cultivated are native to North America. Nutritionally they are fantastic and provide many benefits to general health and wellbeing. Blueberries contain phytonutrients loaded with antioxidants and anti-inflammatory properties, which help support and boost both female and male fertility.

Low in calories and high in nutrients, these deep purple berries are said to be one of the richest sources of antioxidant compounds among all fruits and vegetables, as well as containing anti-inflammatory phytonutrients such as the flavonoid Anthocyanin, which gives blueberries their vibrant colour.

What are the health benefits of blueberries?

Blueberries are a rich source of many vital nutrients including folate, vitamin k, potassium and fibre. They have the highest antioxidant capacity of all fruit and vegetables.

Research has suggested that the anthocyanins in blueberries have beneficial effects on insulin sensitivity and blood sugar control (this is the same for fresh blueberries and blueberry juice). Although blueberries contain moderate amounts of sugar when compared with other fruit, it has been found that the bioactive compounds contained within them, seem to outweigh the negative impact when it comes to blood sugar control.

This is important for those trying to regulate sugar levels such as those with **PCOS** or Type 2 diabetes. They have been linked in studies to lowering blood pressure and cholesterol and benefitting brain function and memory.

Blueberries are a very good source of the powerful antioxidant vitamin C. This helps to support the immune system, is great for the skin, regulates hormones and reduces oxidative stress caused by free radicals to help protect the DNA in sperm and egg cell. It may also help protect against ageing.

Wild blueberries contain a good amount of the Omega 3 fatty acid ALA. Omega 3 fatty acids are also important in regulating hormones, are an integral part of cell membranes throughout the body and affect the function of the cell receptors in these membranes. They provide the starting point for making hormones that regulate blood clotting, the contraction and relaxation of artery walls, and help to reduce inflammation. They also have been linked to providing a good blood flow around the body.

Blueberries contain a good amount of manganese. This contributes to many bodily functions, including the metabolism of amino acids, cholesterol, glucose, and carbohydrates. It also plays a role in bone formation, blood clotting, and reducing inflammation.

How to enjoy blueberries:

- As a snack
- In smoothies
- In pancakes
- For breakfast with natural yoghurt, honey and walnuts
- Make frozen yoghurt
- In muffins
- In salads – such as chicken, avocado and blueberry salad or in a ‘Very Berry Salad’
- Blueberry fool

Blueberry and orange smoothie (makes 2 smoothies)

6 oz blueberries
1 orange, peeled and cut into pieces
2 frozen bananas
150ml (1/4pt) fresh orange juice or water, to blend

Place the blueberries and segments of oranges into a smoothie maker and blend (remove any pips first). Add the bananas and juice (add more water as required to obtain your desired consistency) and blend until smooth. Enjoy!

Sue is a Nutritional Therapist specialising in fertility, women's health and general wellness. She works closely with IVF Babble, IVF Babble Africa and Emme Menopause Magazine. There are lots of recipes and nutrition articles over on IVF Babble written by Sue in the wellness section- www.ivfbabble.com and also www.emmemagazine.com

Sue is able to offer remote Nutritional Therapy consultations. If you would like more information, do take a look at her website www.suebedfordnutrition.co.uk or send her an email sbnutrition@btinternet.com