

POMEGRANATE JUICE AND YOUR HEALTH

Many people know that pomegranate juice is “good for you”, but do you know how or why? It turns out that a fair amount of research has been done on pomegranate juice, and its effects on human health are very impressive!

It is well known that blockage of the arteries feeding the heart (ischemic heart disease) is the #1 cause of death in the U.S. In fact, it is responsible for 434,000 deaths per year in the U.S. alone! A study published in June 2004 Clinical Nutrition looked at the effect of regular consumption of pomegranate juice on coronary arterial atherosclerotic stenosis (blockage of the coronary arteries).

The results were pretty amazing: What they found was that drinking 8oz. of pomegranate juice a day actually reduced the thickness of the plaque buildup in the arteries (“intima-media thickness”)! At 3 months there was a 13% reduction, at 6 months a 22% reduction, at 9 months a 26% reduction, and at 1 year a 35% reduction! In addition, the average participant experienced a 21% drop in their systolic blood pressure. In contrast, the control group that did not consume pomegranate juice experienced an average increase in intima-media thickness of 9%!

Also noted was a 250% increase in glutathione levels after only 3 months. This is extremely significant, because glutathione is not only your body’s most potent detoxifier, but also its most potent antioxidant...protecting your DNA from free radical damage. If you’ve heard me speak, you know that free radical damage to your nuclear and mitochondrial DNA is at the root of many of the negative conditions that we associate with the aging process. Minimize free radical damage, and you significantly slow the aging process!

As if that wasn’t enough, studies published in July 2006 Clinical Cancer Research and October 2005 Proceedings of the National Academy of Science USA demonstrated very positive effects on prostate cancer...both preventatively and therapeutically. What they showed was a dramatic slowing of rising PSA levels, and an inhibitory effect on tumor growth.

The bottom line is that pomegranate juice is pretty amazing stuff, and should be a regular part of your diet! I’ve been consuming it regularly since I learned about its properties, and plan to continue for the rest of my life. I mix it half and half with water. Most grocery stores carry it, but beware of pomegranate “blends”. You want 100% pomegranate juice, preferably not from concentrate, and preferably in glass. It’s not cheap, but try thinking of it as inexpensive, tasty medicine rather than expensive juice! You can get it at Giant in the produce section, or at Trader Joe’s or Whole Foods in Annapolis. Trader Joe’s has the best prices. Bottoms up!