

Health Benefits and Uses of Chokeberry

(*Aronia melanocarpa*)

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Updated April 28, 2018



Black chokeberry. Elin Enger/Moment Open/Getty Images



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Chokeberry (*Aronia melanocarpa*), an antioxidant-rich fruit available in supplement form, is said to offer a range of health benefits related to oxidative stress. Oxidative stress is a destructive process linked to many chronic diseases (including [heart disease](#)), and it occurs when DNA-damaging free radicals overwhelm the body's ability to neutralize them. Chokeberry extract is thought to fight oxidative stress by providing potent [antioxidants](#) known to knock out free radicals and offer additional health benefits.

Benefits of Chokeberry

To date, few studies have tested chokeberry's effects on human health. Here's a look at several findings from animal research, test-tube studies, and small clinical trials:

1) Oxidative Stress

Chokeberry may be useful in treating conditions related to oxidative stress, according to a research review published in 2010. The review's authors sized up 13 studies, finding that chokeberry's mixture of procyanidins, anthocyanins, and phenolic acids "constitutes one of the most potent natural antioxidants." However, the authors note that most of the reviewed studies are of poor quality and that more rigorous research needs to be conducted before chokeberry supplements can be recommended as a means of combating oxidative stress.

2) Metabolic Syndrome

In a small study published in 2010, researchers found that chokeberry extract may benefit people with [metabolic syndrome](#) (a cluster of health problems linked to increased risk of heart disease and [diabetes](#), including excess belly fat, [high cholesterol](#), [high blood pressure](#), and [inflammation](#)). For two months, 25 patients with metabolic syndrome took 100 mg of chokeberry extract three times daily. Study results showed that the patients experienced significant decreases in blood pressure, C-reactive protein (a marker of inflammation), and LDL ("bad") cholesterol.

3) Diabetes

Chokeberry may help keep blood sugar in check in people with diabetes, suggests a small study published in 2002. After drinking 200 ml of a sugar-free, artificially sweetened chokeberry juice daily for three months, diabetes patients showed a decrease in fasting blood sugar levels. Chokeberry juice also appeared to reduce total cholesterol levels.

Caveats

Due to a lack of research, little is known about the safety of regular use of chokeberry supplements.

It's important to keep in mind that [supplements](#) haven't been tested for safety and dietary supplements are largely unregulated. In some cases, the product may deliver doses that differ from the specified amount for each herb. In other cases, the product may be contaminated with other substances such as metals. Also, the safety of supplements in pregnant women, nursing mothers, children, and those with medical conditions or who are taking medications has not been established.

Using Chokeberry for Health

Due to the lack of scientific support for chokeberry's health benefits, it's too soon to recommend chokeberry supplements for any health condition. If you're interested in using chokeberry to treat or prevent a particular health problem, make sure to consult your physician before starting your supplement regimen. Self-treating and avoiding or delaying standard care can have serious consequences.

[Source](#)

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