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livingwell

BEET it! RESEARCH SHOWS THE MANY BENEFITS OF POWER-PACKED BEETS

By PATTY LEON
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More and more people are trying to clean their diet and eat foods that will boost their immunity and improve their overall health.

There are certain foods that are packed with nutrients, vitamin and minerals, yet are relatively low in calories. These nutritionally rich foods are often called "superfoods," and studies show that people who tend to consume these nutrient powerhouses have reduced risk of diseases and increased overall health.

People are familiar with the most often recommended superfoods, like spinach, kale, blueberries, dark chocolate, almonds, wild salmon, seaweed and whole-grain products.

But a "new" superfood that is starting to emerge. It not only offers vitamins minerals and nutrients, according to research, it can also improve oxygen flow to your muscles, increasing speed and endurance in athletes.

What is this new food?
An old staple: Beets.

This root vegetable has known health benefits. It is rich in dietary fiber, potassium, minerals and only has 59 calories in a 1-cup serving.

According to Harvard Medical School, drinking a cup of beet juice daily may lower blood pressure. Beets are rich in nitrates. The human body converts nitrates to nitric oxide, a chemical compound that relaxes blood vessels.

On their own, nitrates have reported adverse health effects,

except when consumed in the form of vegetables. Beets and beet juice are said to be the best source of dietary nitrates.

This increase in blood flow and oxygen helps to regulate blood pressure, and it also helps to feed oxygen to working muscles during exercise.

The National Center for Biotechnology Information published a report in 2012 saying that eating beets acutely improves running performance if consumed prior to a run.

For its test, the center picked 11 recreationally fit men and women. Participants underwent two 5-kilometer treadmill time trials in random sequence — once 75 minutes after consuming baked beets and once 75 minutes after consuming cranberry relish as an equicaloric placebo.

The center found that participants ran 5 percent faster after consuming the beets. It also discovered that the runners' rate of perceived exertion was lower with beet consumption, meaning they felt it was an easier run after the beets, even though their heart rate remained the same in both tests.

Runners looking to boost their speed should consider adding beet juice to their daily eating habits.

Researchers from Exeter University in the United Kingdom performed a study a few years ago. In the study, some participants were given regular beet juice. Others were offered nitrate-depleted beet juice. The participants drank the juice every day for six days, and all the subjects underwent various exercise tests.

Once the first tests were over, the protocol was repeated with the two drinks switched.

On average, the subjects were able to run for 7.6 minutes at high intensity after six days of drinking nitrate-depleted beet juice. But after six days on regular beet juice, they lasted 8.7 minutes.

The researchers found that consuming regular beetroot juice increased blood nitrate levels and reduced resting blood pressure. More importantly, it reduced oxygen consumption during moderate- and high-intensity running and increased time to exhaustion at high intensity by 15 percent.

Beets are also rich in betaine, an amino acid known for its cancer-fighting properties; riboflavin, another cancer-fighting antioxidant; and vitamin B-6, a critical nutrient for healthy nerve function.

Beets are also high in boron, which is directly related to the production of human sex hormones.

It only takes 1 cup of beet juice a day to receive the benefits. And the best way to get the nutrients from this high nitrate punch is to juice or blend the beets.

It is a good idea to wear disposable gloves when working with beets to keep your hands from being stained bright red and pink. Clean kitchen surfaces immediately after cutting or working with beets to avoid a permanent stain on countertops or cutting boards.

If you plan to juice the beet, all you need to do is wash and scrub the root vegetable to remove any dirt and grit from the ground.

Depending on your juicer, you may need to cut the beet. When juicing, you can use the stalk and leafy greens or cut them off, depending on your preference.

Run the beets through the juicer and enjoy.

If you don't have a juicer, clean and peel the beets and chop them into small pieces — the smaller, the better. Add the beets and ¼ cup of water to a blender and blend until smooth, adding a little more water if necessary or to get the consistency you desire. Run the mixture through a strainer if needed and enjoy.

There are countless beet-juice recipes you can try. Blending beets with other fruits and vegetables doesn't diminish its nutrient content. On the contrary, it can boost flavor and nutritional intake.

You can roast beets in the oven for about 30-45 minutes and still maintain the majority of the nutrients. An easy method is to cut the stalk, leaving about an inch or more still attached to the root vegetable. Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Lightly coat each beet with oil, and wrap each beet in aluminum foil and place on a baking sheet. Roast them in the oven. Once roasted, let them sit and cool for about 10 minutes. Peel the beets, and then cut them however you wish. Add them as side dishes to your meal or top a salad with them.



The FAQs of PAD: 10 things you should know about Peripheral Artery Disease

If you are suffering from leg pain, burning or itching in your calves or a wound in your foot or leg that won't heal, you may have peripheral artery disease. Also known as PAD, this condition that affects



Dr. Lee Yates

8 million to 12 million Americans can cause leg tiredness, cramping and pain when walking. PAD also raises the risk of heart attack, stroke, leg amputation and death.

Because September is PAD Awareness month, it is a great time to explore this topic. If you suspect you or a loved one may have PAD, consider these frequently asked questions about the disease:

1. What is PAD?

This is a common circulatory problem in which narrowed arteries reduce blood flow to your limbs. When you develop PAD, your extremities — usually your legs — don't receive enough blood flow to keep up with demand. This causes symptoms, most notably leg pain when walking. PAD is also likely to be a sign of a more-widespread accumulation of fatty deposits in your arteries (atherosclerosis). This condition may be reducing blood flow to your heart and brain, as well as your legs.

2. What is the most common symptom of PAD?

The first symptom that most people

notice is muscle pain. Depending on where the artery blockage is, the pain may affect different muscles in the calf, thigh, buttocks, hip and/or foot.

3. Are there other signs and symptoms of PAD?

Some people experience numbness, achiness or heaviness in the leg muscles when walking or climbing stairs. Other symptoms may include sores or wounds on the toes, feet or legs that heal poorly or not at all; coldness in the lower leg or foot, especially when compared with the other side; no pulse or a weak pulse in the legs or feet; skin on the legs that is shiny, pale or bluish; poor toenail growth; decreased hair growth on the legs; and, in men, erectile dysfunction, especially among those who have diabetes.

4. What are the factors that might increase the risk of developing PAD?

People who smoke or have diabetes have the greatest risk of developing PAD because of reduced blood flow. Other risk factors include obesity; high blood pressure (140/90 millimeters of mercury or higher); high cholesterol (total blood cholesterol over 240 milligrams per deciliter, or 6.2 millimoles per liter); increasing age, especially after reaching 50 years old; a family history of PAD, heart disease or stroke; and

high levels of homocysteine.

5. Aren't leg pain and numbness often a normal part of aging?

Don't dismiss any symptom as a normal part of aging. PAD can be caught early by recognizing risk factors using readily available screening tools.

6. How is PAD managed?

Sometimes, surgery is necessary to minimize the risk for heart attack or stroke. Common management methods include medications that lower cholesterol or prevent blood clots; diabetes management; lifestyle change, such as quitting smoking; exercise programs; and regular follow-up care.

7. My symptoms don't seem that bad. Why should I worry about it?

If you have undiagnosed PAD and systems continue to worsen, blocked blood flow can cause gangrene (tissue death), and in very serious cases, this can lead to leg amputation. PAD also increases your risk of coronary heart disease, heart attack and stroke.

8. Is PAD curable?

Although PAD is serious, it's treatable. If you have the disease, see your doctor regularly for treatment of the underlying atherosclerosis to slow or stop disease progress and reduce the risk of complications. Treatments include lifestyle changes, medicines, and surgery or other

procedures. Researchers continue to explore new therapies for PAD.

9. What happens during the PAD screening?

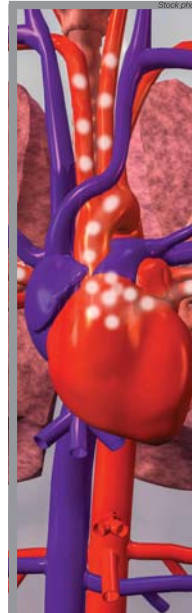
The PAD screening is a quick, easy and non-invasive procedure called the ankle-brachial index, ABI, test. It is done by measuring blood pressure at the ankle and in the arm while a person is at rest.

10. Can PAD cause other health problems?

PAD may be the first warning sign of atherosclerosis — chronic fatty deposit buildups — throughout your arteries. The whole circulatory system, including your heart and brain, are at risk when arteries are blocked and narrowed. Fatty deposits also increase the risk for vascular inflammation and blood clots that can block the blood supply and cause tissue death.

Although peripheral artery disease is potentially a life-threatening condition affecting one out of every 20 Americans older than 50, the good news is that PAD can be managed, or even reversed, with proper care.

Yates is the medical director of vascular surgery at St. Joseph's Candler Health System, a member of the Georgia Vascular Society and a fellow of the American College of Surgeons.



This fall, safely explore the great Georgia outdoors

The cool weather combined with the leaves changing colors make autumn a great time of year to experience the Georgia outdoors. For many people, fall is the season to revisit or discover new parks, mountains and fall festivals. Whether you're camping, hiking or finding your way through a corn maze, taking these simple safety precautions will help make your fall outdoor activities truly enjoyable.



Mark Kishel

Camping: Preparation is key

No organization knows camping better than the Boy Scouts, and their motto — "Be prepared" — is perfectly suited for this activity. Being properly prepared includes knowing what to expect, but also being prepared for the unexpected. In addition to having the essential items listed below, be sure to check the weather forecast prior to departure and tell a friend or family member where you'll be and when you expect to return. Last, it is best to enjoy camping with a minimum of three people in the group; that way if one is injured and cannot move, one person can stay with the injured party while the other seeks help.

Essential items for camping include:

- First-aid kit, which should include antiseptic ointment or cream for cuts and scrapes, tweezers, insect repellent

and pain relievers;

- Map of the area and a compass or GPS device;
- Flashlight;
- Knife;
- Waterproof fire starter;
- Shelter material;
- Whistle; and
- Proper clothing for weather.

Hiking: It's a marathon, not a sprint

Safety measures used for camping should apply to hiking as well. Depending on the terrain, elevation and distance, your health could be impacted by the trail you choose. If you have medical conditions, discuss the trip with your doctor and get approval before departing.

Be sure to wear appropriate clothing, bring plenty of water and pack energy bars, granola or fruit. If you use water from a natural source, remember to disinfect it.

If you're traveling with children, a good rule of thumb is to allow the slowest person to set the pace. Keep in mind that this is not a race, and a steady pace with frequent rest stops will get you there with less discomfort.

Whether you're camping or hiking, you'll encounter plenty of insects and plants, such as poison ivy, that may be unfamiliar to you. For instance, poison ivy is one of the best-known plants, yet many people don't realize it changes

from green in the summer to various shades of yellow, orange and red during the fall.

Fall festivals: Stay together and alert

Here in Georgia, no autumn is complete without a visit to a corn maze, pumpkin patch or apple festival. The key to making these outings fun for the whole family is sticking together and staying alert.

Corn mazes are designed for fun and confusion, so becoming lost in the maze is a common concern. Be sure the maze has employees who are skilled at maneuvering their way through or are stationed on elevated platforms. Or better yet, see if they provide maps. Also, stay together as a group.

During hayrides, make sure everyone in your group is sitting at all times with arms and legs inside the wagon. Hold on to small children and railings, as bumps in the path could easily bounce riders off their seats. While you should be alert during the hayride, it's equally important to be cautious when loading and unloading from the wagon. The combination of weather, hay and straw could create slippery conditions.

Kishel is senior clinical officer for Blue Cross Blue Shield of Georgia and a fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics.



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The 40th Annual Odum Homecoming

Saturday, October 3, 2015 promises to be the biggest and best yet!

Parade will begin at 10 am and will feature **T.V. celebrity Bobby Brantley** from **Lizard Lick towing** Who will also have a booth set up on the town square signing autographs and taking pictures - no charge. He will be there all day.

Bracelets will be sold for a Zip Line from Let It Zip (Southeast's largest and safest mobile zip line) Bungee, double lane slide, bounce house and obstacle course. Bracelets are \$5.00 each for ages 3 and under (does not include zip line and bungee). Bracelets for ages 4 and up include zip line, bungee, slide, bounce house and obstacle course and will be sold for \$15.00 each. These activities will be open from 11a.m. - 5p.m.

Poultry Palace Trained Chicken Eggzibit
Agri-entertainment for people of all ages!

Performances every hour on the hour. (15-minute shows) Their chickens sing, dance, talk and do some impressive tricks. This is very entertaining and is a must-see for all ages. The Chicken Show is sponsored by United Egg Marketing Corporation of Blackshear, Georgia.

A Gaither Homecoming style Gospel Sing will be held on the town square beginning at 7:00 P. M. featuring Mickey Tomberlin, Rhonda Trull and other local favorites

Odum Homecoming T-shirts are \$12.00 each and are on sale now at Odum City Hall. They are available in Lime Green, Coral, Pink and Gray and sizes range from Small Child (6-8) to Adult 3 XL.

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