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## Press Releases

Black Raspberries: 'Fruitraceuticals' of the Future Posted 4/25/2006

**EDITOR'S NOTE: Christine Sardo, MPH, RD, manager of cancer chemoprevention trials at the Ohio State University Comprehensive Cancer Center, will lecture on the anticancer properties of black raspberries and other "fruitraceuticals" on Tuesday, May 2, at 12:15 p.m. at the Grand Hyatt Hotel, New York, N.Y. Her presentation is part of the conference "Nutrition and Health: State of the Science and Clinical Applications," presented by the Program in Integrative Medicine at the University of Arizona College of Medicine and the Rosenthal Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine, Columbia University College of Physicians & Surgeons.**

COLUMBUS, Ohio – Researchers here are so enthusiastic about the anticancer potential of black raspberries and other dark-colored fruits that they say it may be time to add a new word to our vocabulary: "Fruitraceuticals."

"A lot of people are already familiar with the terms 'nutraceutical' and 'functional foods,' – both terms that refer to foods that offer proven health or medical benefits when consumed," says Christine Sardo, a research dietitian in the Ohio State University Comprehensive Cancer Center (OSUCCC), "but we are so impressed with the health benefits of black raspberries that we think they – and other fruits high in anthocyanins – may deserve their own category."

Anthocyanins are chemicals that give some fruits their deep, purple color and are believed to be one of the active ingredients that can help prevent or slow the growth of some forms of cancer. Anthocyanins are found in a host of fruits – blackberries, blueberries, elderberries, Concord grapes, raisins and plums, but are most abundant in black raspberries. Sardo says anthocyanins pack their biggest health punch when the fruit is at its ripest.

Laboratory studies have shown that some fruits are better than others in fighting the oxidative stress and DNA damage we all experience by simply being around carcinogens in our environment, says Sardo, adding that black raspberries may be among the most potent.

Scientists at Ohio State have been studying berries' chemopreventive punch for nearly two decades under the direction of Dr. Gary Stoner, a professor in the OSU College of Medicine and the School of Public Health. In the late 1980s Stoner identified ellagic acid in fruits as an important anticancer compound, but since then, he and his colleagues have discovered a host of other bioactive ingredients that may play critical roles, as well.

Sardo, a registered dietitian, says fighting cancer with proper diet and nutrition is a very complex business. In other words, there isn't one, single compound that can do the whole job. "Instead, it's probably a mix of effects and synergy among multiple components, including phenolic acids, flavonoids, complex polyphenols and vitamins and minerals."

Over the years, Stoner's research team found that a diet rich in freeze-dried black raspberries can inhibit the growth of cancer in rats, mice and hamsters with esophageal, colon and oral cancers. The results were so striking that they are now conducting similar trials in humans.

Early results show that people can consume fairly significant amounts of freeze-dried berries daily for up to six months without any significant problems.

"We are experimenting with everything from an oral black raspberry gel to a berry 'slurry,'" says Sardo, who manages the clinical trials. And so far, she says the results are "berry,

berry encouraging.”

In addition to her clinical duties, Sardo also teaches, periodically offering such courses as Mediterranean Cooking, 15-Minute Meals, Cooking for Cancer Prevention and Pesto Pizza Making. In 2005, she received the Young Dietitian of the Year Award from the American Dietetic Association.

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