Cranberry (vaccinium macrocarpon)
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What is cranberry? Where is it found?

Cranberry bushes usually grow in bogs and swampland, and are small, red, and rather tart. They are often used in cooking, and as a side dish at many holiday dinners. In addition to its culinary uses, cranberry has been prescribed for its healing properties as well.

Traditionally, cranberry has been used by herbalists to remove stones from the blood and reduce the formation of kidney stones. One of the most popular uses for cranberry today is to help prevent urinary tract infections. Substances in cranberry, such as polyphenolic compounds and anti-adherence properties, which prevent the E. coli bacteria that cause most urinary tract infections from adherence to the wall of the bladder. There is also evidence that cranberry juice can help prevent plaque forming before leading to the formation of tooth decay, and reduce the incidence of cavities, gingivitis, and gum disease.

How much cranberry should I take?

How to take cranberry

Cranberry is available in a variety of forms, ranging from fresh berries to tea, preserves, juices, tablets, extracts, and capsules. Many of these can be purchased at health food stores or supermarkets. However, most cranberry juice commercially sold is comprised of cranberry juice cocktail (containing at least 50 percent cranberry juice daily). As an alternative, patients may take between 500 and 1000 milligrams of dried cranberry powder. To treat an existing urinary tract infection, most practitioners recommend between 6000 and 8000 milligrams of a standardized cranberry extract divided into two or three doses over a period of 12 and 52 ounces of cranberry juice consumed daily. Taking cranberry is believed to improve cranberry's healing effects, along with shrinking the size of cysts and stones. It is also used to treat urinary tract infections.

What forms of cranberry are available?

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What is the recommended dosage?

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What are the cranberry contraindications?

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Cranberry can interact with medications, and patients who are taking certain medications may want to speak with their doctor before taking cranberry. Patients taking medications to treat their diabetes or urinary tract should not take cranberry products without their doctor's supervision. As always, make sure to consult with a licensed health care practitioner before taking cranberry or any other herbal remedy or dietary supplement.

What is cranberry good for?

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