

NEWS RELEASE

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## **ENJOY SUMMERS BERRIES**

Berries are one of the nation's most well-liked fruits. Other than the hot temperatures, berries let us know its summer! Strawberries, blackberries, blueberries and raspberries are all at their peak during the summer months. Whether you have a favorite or enjoy them all, berries are great and they are great for your health!

Berries are basically fat free if eaten "as is." Berries are colorful fruits that contain many vitamins, minerals, fiber and phytochemicals. As a fruit, berries are a great source of fiber and vitamin C.

Dietary fiber is a complex carbohydrate that cannot be digested in the body. It is found in whole grains, vegetables and fruits. Eating vegetables and fruits with the peeling or skin left on provides the greatest amount of fiber in the diet. A fiber-rich diet has been shown to decrease coronary heart disease risk and lower incidences of colorectal cancer.

Vitamin C is a water-soluble antioxidant vitamin. Since it is water-soluble, our bodies cannot store Vitamin C; therefore, we must replace it every day. Vitamin C helps us to fight infections, including colds and heals cuts and bruises. It also helps our body to absorb and utilize iron and other nutrients we need.

Phytochemicals are substances found naturally in plant foods, including fruits, vegetables, grains, legumes, nuts and teas. Phytochemicals work with the vitamins, minerals and dietary fiber to prevent disease and promote good health.

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends that we eat fruit every day. The number of servings we need depends on our age and gender. Women above the age of 30 need to eat 1 ½ cups of fruit each day. Men need 2 cups. To get the full benefits of all the nutrients and phytochemicals in fruits and berries, we need to eat a variety.

Berries are at their best when bought “in season.” That means right now! Strawberries are at their peak during the months of April to June. Blueberries and blackberries are in season from June to July, and raspberry season starts in July. When buying berries, keep these points in mind:

- Buy berries that are dry, firm and well-shaped.
- Do not wash berries before storing them in the refrigerator.
- Eat berries within a week after purchase. Raspberries and blackberries are best if eaten within two to three days of purchase.
- Freeze berries to keep them for 10 to 12 months.
- Do not thaw commercially frozen berries before adding them to baked goods.
- Make berries the last ingredient you add to batters.

There are so many delicious ways to enjoy berries - straight from the garden, in baked goods, pies, cobblers, smoothies and salads. Keep them on hand for a great, low-fat snack!

If you would like a copy of a handout on berries, contact the Howard County Extension Office at 870-845-7517 or visit our office located on the second floor of the courthouse. I'll be glad to share it with you. The handout has information on the health benefits of berries, plus information on buying and storing them.

### Recipe of the Week

This recipe was featured at the horticulture field day held last week at the Southwest Arkansas Research Center in Hope. It was delicious and super easy to make!

## Lemon Blueberry Drop Scones

Yield: 14 scones

### Ingredients:

- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 cup whole wheat flour
- 1/3 cup sugar
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 teaspoon grated lemon zest
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup lemon yogurt
- 1 large egg, room temperature
- 1/4 cup butter, melted
- 1 cup fresh or frozen blueberries

### Glaze:

- 1/2 cup confectioners' sugar
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1/2 teaspoon grated lemon zest

### Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 400°F.
2. In a large bowl, combine the first 6 ingredients. In another bowl, combine the yogurt, egg and butter. Stir into dry ingredients just until moistened.
3. Fold in blueberries.

4. Drop by heaping tablespoonfuls, 2 inches apart, onto a baking sheet lined with parchment paper or that has been greased. Bake at 400° for 15-18 minutes or until lightly browned.

5. While cooling, combine glaze ingredients, drizzle over warm scones.

Nutrition Facts, Serving Size 1 scone - Calories 149, Fat 4.3g, Cholesterol 23 mg, Sodium 128mg Carbohydrates 25g, Dietary Fiber 1.7g, Protein 3.6g.