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Antioxidant-Rich Hazelnuts Ranked Among Superfoods

Research confirms hazelnuts naturally combat free radicals

SEATTLE, WASH. — While hazelnuts are known to be a good source of dietary fiber, vitamin E, magnesium and vitamin B, a recent study shows they are also one of the highest natural sources of antioxidants. Foods rich in antioxidant content, commonly known as “superfoods”, mop up free radicals in the blood stream that can eventually lead to serious diseases.

In order to measure the amount of antioxidants in a food source, the Oxygen Radical Absorbance Capacity (ORAC) method put hazelnuts to the test. Results showed that hazelnuts have one of the highest ORAC values among superfoods. They are also one of the most antioxidant-rich nuts.

ORAC measures foods’ ability to destroy free radicals, small reactive molecules that can cause damage to the body’s cells and have been linked to triggering cancer and heart disease. Free radicals can occur from routine activities such as eating and exercising. They can be combated by the antioxidants found naturally in many fruits, nuts and vegetables.

A similar study found hazelnuts to have one of the highest Proanthocyanidin (PAC) contents among superfoods and the second highest among nuts. PACs are known to have antioxidant capabilities 20 times more powerful than vitamin C and 50 times more potent than vitamin E. The antioxidants found in PACs may have the ability to

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strengthen blood vessels, suppress platelet stickiness in arteries, reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease, delay the onset of dementia and lower blood pressure.

The Hazelnut Council was formed in 1996 with the end goal of increasing the awareness, distribution and consumption of hazelnuts in the United States. The hazelnut industries of Turkey and Oregon and the Association of Food Industries, which imports Turkish hazelnuts, comprise its membership. For more information please contact Simon Bowers at sbowers@hazelnutcouncil.org or visit www.hazelnutcouncil.org.

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