Acai Berry
The new antiaging miracle
by Shelley Burns

It's a well-established fact that antioxidants are important for skin health and antiaging because of their ability to scavenge free radicals. Beneficial antioxidants include vitamins A, C, and E, trace minerals like selenium and zinc, and polyphenols like anthocyanins (found in the skin of red grapes). Unfortunately, it's a challenge to find a healthy balance of these nutrients on a daily basis.

What if we could find all of these antioxidants in one food? Now we can and it comes in the form of a berry known as the acai.

While it's been around for thousands of years, the acai berry was only introduced to North America and Europe in the 1990s. Amazonian tribes used the berry for medicinal purposes. The berry comes from a palm tree found in Brazil. The fruit grows in clusters of about 700 to 900 berries and is similar in appearance, color, and size to that of red grapes. The seed accounts for 80 percent of the fruit; the other 20 percent makes up the pulp, which is the main ingredient used in juices and teas.

From an antioxidant perspective, the acai berry is twice as potent as the pomegranate and two or three times more potent than the blueberry. It's 10 times more potent than red wine in facilitating an aging slowdown and reducing inflammation. The oxygen-radical absorbance capacity—a method of measuring antioxidant capacity of different foods—rates the acai berry as higher than any other edible berry.

Acai has a complete protein similar to that of an egg and has an essential fatty acid profile similar to that of olive oil. The protein helps in muscle contraction and regeneration and slows the destructive effects on skin that cause signs of aging. The fatty acid profile helps the efficient function of hormones, neurotransmitters, and insulin receptors, which is important because of the high insulin levels associated with processed foods like baked goods, cakes, and pastries. These can create an inflammatory state, again causing premature aging. The berry is also an excellent source of fiber and has a low glycemic index.

The acai berry can be consumed three ways—as a liquid in juice, as a supplement, or as a tea. The recommended dose is one or two cups of tea daily or two tablespoons of the liquid form. In capsule form, the recommended dose is 2,000 milligrams daily.

Not only does the acai berry have strong antioxidant properties, it increases energy, improves digestion and circulation, promotes sound sleep, and strengthens the immune system. Perhaps it is an antiaging miracle after all.

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