

PENNY SAVER NEWS

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Forget about super-fruits from the other side of the globe, we have some of the best here. Those wonderful deep dark purple grapes, blushing red grapes, even the glowing pale green grapes are all full of a whole list of great ingredients. Besides tasting wonderful and providing plenty of vitamins and minerals, grapes are powerhouses of antioxidants - the polyphenols. There are dozens of different polyphenols, and medical research is still sorting out exactly which ones do what in the body. But the evidence is piling up that throughout the body grapes are good for health.

There are probably many ways that polyphenols help protect us. Certainly one main route is by their antioxidant ability. Oxidation in metal is rust. Oxidation in the body creates damaged cholesterol that stick to the sides of our arteries. Arteries without cholesterol can let blood flow through them more easily, and that keeps blood pressure down. Antioxidants in dark purple grape juice stop the damage. Several small studies found measurable improvements in blood flow for people drinking grape juice.

Some related studies also found that people drinking grape juice had more flexible arteries. If you've ever tried to straighten out a garden hose when it was cold you know how difficult that can be. But softening the hose lets the water move more quickly. Polyphenols in our blood help to relax and soften our artery walls. When our heart pumps, those arteries were able to expand and let the blood move easily.

Just like red wine, red and purple grape juice has something that keeps our blood cells from sticking together, probably those polyphenols again. Blood cells that are not

sticky won't clot and plug the arteries. The group of people who did not seem to get any benefit from drinking grape juice was those who were taking aspirin every day. And if you're taking medications to thin your blood all ready, don't stop them until your doctor agrees! But if you're not on medications, a glass of grape juice a day may keep you off them longer.

There's more to our body than blood, and more help from grapes too. That oxidation problem can also happen in our brains. The more 'rust' we get, the more slowly our brains work. We start having problems with remembering words or places. And our brains can't tell our hands or legs where to go or how to move as easily. But several studies across the country have found that older people who drank grape juice, compared to a fruit 'punch' (basically sugar water), improved a lot in memory and movement. They even found that grape juice helped prevent the build-up of those tangled cells that show up in the brains of people with Alzheimer's disease.

Another big area of research these days is our immunity. There's a lot more research that needs to be done on grape juice and immunity, but a couple of small projects found that grape juice boosted the power of our immune system to attack invading bacteria. And two studies seemed to show that grape juice by itself could keep viruses from getting out of the gut and into our cells. No promises, but promising.

So, are you ready to reach for some grapes? Go for it, or have a glass of juice. Most of the studies that found these benefits used purple grape juice. Some polyphenols are dark purple, and strongly colored foods usually have more antioxidants. But an exception is raisins. Golden raisins actually have more power than dark ones. Why? Most raisins start out as green grapes. As they dry they gradually darken. But

darkening is oxidation, and that uses up all the antioxidants of the grapes. Golden raisins are protected from darkening, so they get to pass all their antioxidants on to us when we eat them.

Here's a grape chutney that you can serve with grilled chicken, with pork chops or roast turkey. It's a sweet, tart, crunchy, spicy, colorful, healthy topping for your plate.

Grape Chutney

1 ½ cups Concord grape juice	1 Tbsp vinegar(rice wine vinegar is best)
2 dried apricots, diced	1 small apple, diced
3 water chestnuts, diced (or 1/3 cup diced jicama)	½ cup diced red onion
¼ cup diced celery	1 tsp ground ginger
1/3 tsp dried rosemary (1 tsp fresh)	1 tsp dried thyme (1 Tbsp fresh)

In small saucepan combine all but the rosemary and thyme. Bring to boil, reduce heat and simmer for 15 minutes. Stir in herbs. Serve warm over meat, or refrigerate until meal time. Reheat briefly to serve. Serves 4.

Recipe adapted from Welchs.com/health