



A Daily Dose of Blueberries

Fruits and vegetables have essential nutrients to support health and well-being

“Let food be thy medicine” is a proverb often attributed to Hippocrates from 400 BC. This concept is experiencing a resurgence and is now central to the federal strategy to end hunger, reduce diet-related diseases and reduce healthcare costs. Today, Food as Medicine, broadly defined as the integration of food and nutrition interventions into the healthcare system, is poised to be a transformative approach to health, wellness and disease prevention.

Why is Food as Medicine suddenly rising to the forefront? Poor nutrition is associated with an epidemic of food-related diseases. In fact, about half of all American adults – or 117 million individuals – have one or more preventable chronic disease, many of which are related to poor-quality eating patterns and physical inactivity. These include cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, some cancers, and poor bone health.¹

These startling statistics are what led the government to convene The White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition and Health in 2022, which brought renewed attention to the Food as Medicine movement. The conference catalyzed nearly \$10 billion in private and public sector commitments to support improved nutrition and health, including many initiatives to scale Food as Medicine programs. Most recently, Instacart and the U.S. Dept of Health & Human Services announced a new public-private partnership to support and scale food as medicine interventions, including by increasing access to nutritious food and offering the tools needed to support better health and wellbeing for individuals and families across the country.²

Produce Prescriptions

While there is no specific “Food as Medicine” diet, fruits and vegetables are a cornerstone of published recommendations to date. That’s why produce prescription programs have allowed providers to prescribe fruits and vegetables to patients with diet-related diseases or those facing food insecurity. Produce prescriptions are typically provided as vouchers or debit cards for free or discounted produce, distributed by healthcare providers, and can be redeemed at various locations.

117MM

people have one or more preventable chronic disease¹

Get the scoop on blueberry nutrition

One serving (a handful or a cup) of blueberries:

- 1 Is considered one serving of fruit.
- 2 Contains just 80 calories and is a good source of fiber.
- 3 Contributes essential nutrients including vitamin C, vitamin K, manganese, dietary fiber and phytonutrients called polyphenols.
- 4 Contains anthocyanins (163.3mg/100g), which are compounds that give blueberries their blue color.
- 5 Is a good source of fiber and vitamin C, containing ~4g and 14mg, respectively.
- 6 Is an excellent source of manganese and vitamin K, containing 0.5mg and 0.25mcg, respectively.



USHBC is Leading the Charge for Produce

- Proud member of the National Produce Prescription Collaborative, an organization that leverages Produce Prescriptions as prevention & intervention for diet-related diseases.
- 2023 sponsor of the Food as Medicine Summit to help increase awareness of blueberries and the intersection between diet and chronic disease.
- Socializing the concept of food as medicine in recipes, social and digital content.
- Exploring opportunities to reach health professionals and organizations at the cutting edge of Food as Medicine programs and integrate blueberries into Food as Medicine interventions.

#DYK:

Blueberries have been certified by the American Heart Association as heart-healthy.



The U.S. Highbush Blueberry Council (USHBC) was selected as a partner for the White House Challenge to End Hunger and Build Healthy Communities and made a formal commitment to invest up to \$7 million in health and nutrition research by 2030 to improve health outcomes and diet quality of all Americans.

References

¹ The Healthy Eating Index: How Is America Doing? | USDA

² Instacart and HHS Launch Public-Private Partnership to Scale Food as Medicine Programs and Improve Health Outcomes Across the United States