

Health Benefits of Goji Berries

Although goji berries have a long history of use in traditional Chinese medicine, there is currently a lack of research on the safety or effectiveness of goji berries in supplement form.

1) Eyesight

Goji berries are a source of zeaxanthin, an antioxidant that may protect the eyes from high-energy light waves such as the sun's ultraviolet rays (along with the carotenoid lutein). Studies suggest that zeaxanthin and lutein in the eyes are associated with better vision and decreased likelihood of [cataracts](#) and age-related macular degeneration. Although goji berries are a source, zeaxanthin is found in many vegetables including [kale](#), spinach and broccoli.

MORE: [Supplements for age-related macular degeneration](#).

2) General Health

In recent years, goji juice has become popular as a health beverage. Companies marketing goji juice often mention the folktale of a man named Li Qing Yuen who consumed goji berries daily and lived to be 252 years old. Some of the claims include:

- protect the liver
- improve sexual function and fertility
- strengthen the legs
- skin and hair health
- boost immune function
- improve circulation
- promote weight loss
- promote longevity

So far, scientific support for any of these claims is lacking. Although goji berries used in traditional Chinese medicine are typically in dried fruit form, goji juice is often costly (a 32-ounce bottle of goji juice can cost \$50 USD).

SEE ALSO: [Look Up Remedies by Health Condition](#) | [The 15 Most Popular Weight Loss Supplements](#) | [8 Ways to Relieve Depression Naturally](#) | [5 Natural Ways to Deal With It](#) | [Can Biotin Promote Hair Growth?](#)

3) Cancer

Several lab studies suggest that goji berry extracts may slow the growth of cancer cells and lower cholesterol levels. However, it is too soon to recommend goji berries in the treatment of cancer.

What Goji Berries Taste Like

Goji berries have a mild tangy taste that is slightly sweet and sour. The whole, dried berries have a similar shape and chewy texture as raisins.

Common Forms

Other names for goji berries are *Lycium barbarum*, wolfberry, gou qi zi, and *Fructus lycii*. In [traditional Chinese medicine](#), goji berries are eaten raw, brewed into tea, added to Chinese soups, or made into liquid extracts.

Goji berry juice and tea are available. The berries or juice can be used in smoothies. Whole goji berries are also an ingredient in packaged snack foods such as goji berry trail mix.

Caveats

Little is known about the safety of using goji supplements or consuming goji juice in the long-term. However, goji may lower [blood sugar](#) levels and increase the risk of bleeding and there is concern that goji may interact with diabetes medications and/or anticoagulant drugs (commonly called "blood-thinners"), such as warfarin (Coumadin). For example, a case report published in the journal *Annals of Pharmacotherapy* of a 61-year old woman who had an increased risk of bleeding, indicated by an elevated international normalized ratio (INR). She had been drinking 3-4 cups daily of goji berry tea. Her blood work returned to normal after discontinuing the goji berry tea.

As with other supplements, goji berry supplements haven't been tested for safety in pregnant women, nursing mothers, children, and those with medical conditions or who are taking medications. You can find out more about how to use supplements safely [here](#).

Where to Find Goji Berries

Whole goji berries are available at Chinese herbal shops and at some health food stores. It is also found in food products (such as trail mix).

Goji juice can be found in some health food stores and online.

SEE ALSO: [Hidden Benefits of Green Tea](#) | [Matcha Tea for Health?](#) | [Noni Juice](#) | [Acai](#) | [Mangosteen](#) | [Look Up Supplements A-Z](#)

Sources

Cheng CY et al. "Fasting plasma zeaxanthin response to Fructus barbarum L. (wolfberry; Kei Tze) in a food-based human supplementation trial." *British Journal of Nutrition*. 93.1 (2005):123-30.

Lam AY et al. "Possible interaction between warfarin and Lycium barbarum L." *Annals of Pharmacotherapy*. 35.10 (2001):1199-201.

Wu H et al. "Effect of Lycium barbarum polysaccharide on the improvement of antioxidant ability and DNA damage in NIDDM rats." *Yakugaku Zasshi*. 126.5 (2006):365-71.

Disclaimer: The information contained on this site is intended for educational purposes only and is not a substitute for advice, diagnosis or treatment by a licensed physician. It is not meant to cover all possible precautions, drug interactions, circumstances or adverse effects. You should seek prompt medical care for any health issues and consult your doctor before using alternative medicine or making a change to your regimen.