

Vitamin D3 and Aronia berries in the dark winter months



December 2018: Many people associate the dark part of the year with a never-ending cycle of fatigue, exhaustion and restlessness. This is often wrongly referred to as the “winter blues”. This seasonal feeling isn’t usually caused by a person’s psyche, but rather a lack of sunlight and low vitamin D levels.

Aroniabeere e.V. explains how to recognise vitamin D deficiencies and how aronia berries can help you maintain vitamin levels.

Not many vitamins are as polarising as the “sunshine vitamin” (D3). This vitamin is considered more of a hormone and gives rise to constant discussions during the dark months from November to March. The debates focus on whether vitamin D3 levels should be boosted with dietary supplements during the winter months. “It’s clear that our vitamin D levels drop drastically in winter, as the sun is too low”, explains the health and nutrition consultant, Claudia Höft. Therefore, boosting vitamin D levels with dietary supplements can be helpful during the winter months. The expert explains that eating the right foods can also help to maintain or stabilise vitamin D levels in the darker seasons.

Positive dietary influences

Vitamin D is also nicknamed the “sunshine vitamin”, because it is mainly synthesised in the skin with the help of UV-B radiation. “Vitamin D is only contained in a few foods”, explains Claudia Höft. Examples include wild, oily fish like herring, salmon and eel. Avocados are another good source of vitamin D but only cover a small amount of the required daily intake.

A nutritious diet with lots of good fatty acids can improve the storage and use of vitamin D in the body. “The nutrients found in aronia berries make a particularly valuable contribution, because they contain the sunshine vitamin’s most important partner, vitamin K2”, explains the expert. Both these vitamins play a major role in the absorption and supply of calcium, which is vital for healthy bones. That’s why they’re often offered in a combined formula.

Aronia berries – important vitamin suppliers

However, the amount of vitamin K found in some of these formulas is exceeded by the amount contained in dried aronia berries:

100 g of the dark violet power berries contain around 310 mg of the important vitamin. One 20 g portion (2 tablespoons) contains 83% of an adult’s average daily recommended intake¹. Their secondary plant substances are an additional benefit, explains Claudia Höft. These include in particular plant pigments, especially colourless OPCs and anthocyanins. These are responsible for the intense colouring of the aronia, and they strengthen the immune system and can naturally prevent and cure infections. “Aronia berries can make a significant contribution to our health and well-being, especially in the dark winter months. That’s why you should look out for high-quality aronia berries in places like health food shops”, advises the health expert.

¹ An adult’s average daily recommended intake of vitamin K2 is between 60 mg (women) and 80 mg (men).



Symptoms and causes of vitamin D deficiency

If you experience listlessness, depression, constant fatigue or circulatory disorders throughout the winter months, you might be suffering from a vitamin D deficiency. You can find out your vitamin D levels by having a blood test carried out by your GP. “Values below 20 ng/ml are linked to the typical symptoms of the winter blues”, says the expert. The main reason for these symptoms is a lack of vitamin D, which stops the body absorbing the calcium it needs. “Vitamin D promotes the absorption of calcium. So if the body doesn’t get enough of the sunshine vitamin, it won’t get enough calcium either”, Claudia Höft continues. Conditions like rickets in children and osteoporosis in adults are linked to low vitamin D levels.

In average 100g dried Aronia berries contain e.g.

	Value	Share of daily requirement per 100g	Share of daily requirement per portion (20g)
Vitamins			
A Carotenoid	2,400 mg/100 g	300%	60%
E	3,100 mg/100 g	26%	5%
K	0,310 mg/100 g	413%	83%
Folic acid	0,240 mg/100 g	120%	24%
C	14,80 mg/100 g	7%	1%
Minerals			
Potassium	1.283,000 mg/100 g	64%	13%
Manganese	3,600 mg/100 g	180%	36%
Iodine	0,0064 mg/100 g	4%	1%

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