

## **Polyphenols: plant power and healthy hearts**

**June 2018: They say the way to a man's heart is through his stomach. But not everyone knows that heart health is actually closely linked to our stomach and eating habits. Aroniabeere e.V. is working alongside the medically accredited health and nutrition consultant, Claudia Michaela Höft, to educate people about the positive effects of Mediterranean cuisine – and especially aronia berries – on our hearts.**

Nutritionists have long recommended Mediterranean cuisine and plant-based cooking, referring to various studies that demonstrate the correlation between a poor diet and heart disease. “We constantly hear that secondary plant substances can protect people against diet-related diseases”, explains Claudia Höft. The group of plant pigments known as “polyphenols” are considered particularly important in this regard, mainly due to their antioxidant effect. They can help to prevent heart attacks, arteriosclerosis and free radicals in the body, and they can also regulate blood pressure. An impressive amount of polyphenols can be found in aronia berries.

### **Even small changes bring great success**

An adequate supply of natural vitamins and minerals has a very positive effect on the heart and blood vessels, ensuring normal blood pressure levels. Certain polyphenols – like those found in the aronia berry – are really easy to add to your diet. Drinking just 100 ml of aronia juice a day is enough to supply the body with the heart-strengthening plant substances it needs. Mixing it with a nice pomegranate juice will give you a tasty drink that's also good for your heart. “You can even find pre-mixed aronia-pomegranate juice in health food shops and well-stocked retailers”, explains the health expert.

Cardiologists constantly remind us that a Mediterranean-style diet can have a positive impact on your heart health. Now that the days are getting warmer and the evenings longer, it's the perfect time to treat our hearts to some Mediterranean dishes. Fresh food without added colours and preservatives, plenty of fresh or gently steamed vegetables, and low-sugar fruit like apples and berries are good for your heart and perfect for the summer. You can also fuel your body with healthy nutrients by using high-quality extra virgin cooking oils with a high omega-3 content, and by eating oily fish and white meat. Just add 100 ml of aronia juice every day, and your heart will be jumping with joy!

### **Aroniabeere e.V. is raising the profile of the secret super berry**

Aroniabeere e.V. was founded in December last year to educate people about the effects of the aronia berry. The little aronia berry contains a highly concentrated cocktail of nutrients like no other fruit. With the highest proportion of antioxidant substances, aronia really is the undisputed champion of the healthy berries, leaving its top rivals like the elderberry and blueberry way behind. The aronia also contains an outstanding amount of anti-ageing ingredients (OPCs and anthocyanins).

**Scientific evidence of the aronia's effects on heart health:**

*Reduced blood pressure:*

Tjelle, TE. (et al.): Polyphenol-rich juices reduce blood pressure measures in a randomised controlled trial in high normal and hypertensive volunteers. Norway, 2015. Available online: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/26227795>.

*Reduced blood lipid levels:*

Park, CH. (et al.): Aronia melanocarpa Extract Ameliorates Hepatic Lipid Metabolism through PPAR $\gamma$ 2 Downregulation. Korea, 2017. Available online: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/28081181>.

Valcheva-Kuzmanova, S. (et al.): Hypoglycemic and hypolipidemic effects of Aronia melanocarpa fruit juice in streptozotocin-induced diabetic rats. Bulgaria, 2007. Available online: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/17440626>.

*Prevention of cardiovascular diseases and effects on healthy blood vessels (vascular permeability):*

Bell DR., Gochenaur, K.: Direct vasoactive and vasoprotective properties of anthocyanin-rich extracts. USA, 2006. Available online: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/16339348>.

*Protection against arteriosclerosis:*

Broncel, M. (et al.): Aronia melanocarpa extract reduces blood pressure, serum endothelin, lipid, and oxidative stress marker levels in patients with metabolic syndrome. Poland, 2007. Available online: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/20037491>.

**In average 100g fresh Aronia berries contain e.g.**

<b>Nutritional values</b>		<b>Vitamins</b>		<b>Minerals</b>	
Energy	96 kcal	Vitamin K	up to 1000 $\mu$ g	Potassium	218 mg
Protein	1,9 g	Vitamin E	up to 3,1 mg	Zinc	0,147 mg
Carbohydrate	18,0 g	Folic acid	210 $\mu$ g	Iron	0,93 mg
Fat	1,5 g	Vitamin C	up to 50 mg		

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