

Chatting with The Good Dr. Laura Shook

December 2010

How was your Thanksgiving? Was there turkey? Did you get your fill of stuffing and gravy? Was your cranberry sauce from a can or do you have a secret recipe?

For centuries cranberries have been the rock stars of medicinal lore. These tart red berries were used by Native Americans to fight infection. The Pilgrims ate cranberries to fight scurvy. Colonial New Englanders used cranberries for food, fabric dye and in poultices to treat wounds and blood poisoning.

More recently an article published by Tufts University, discussed research which showed that phytochemicals (plant chemicals) in cranberries have been shown to interfere with the adhesion of bacteria to select cell types (makes the bacteria less sticky) helping to prevent urinary tract infections, gastric ulcers and gum disease. It seems that cranberries may also help to stave off cardiovascular disease. Antioxidants found in cranberries, blueberries, elderberries, raspberries ... (all the dark red, blue and purple berries) make these fruits champions in the fight against free radical damage which accelerates aging and promotes cancer. Hooray for the cranberry.

Now sugar, a common companion to the tart cranberry, promotes gum disease, promotes heart disease and elevates blood sugar which leads to long list of health complaints. So go easy on the sugar when taking the bite out of your cranberry sauce. Start by using half of the recommended sugar and add apples, pears, pineapple and oranges to reduce tartness. If you are consuming cranberries solely for medicinal purposes you might want to consider one of the unsweetened cranberry concentrates available online or in the natural food section of the market.

Dr. Laura's Cranberry Sauce

When possible use organic and or locally grown ingredients.

1- 12oz package whole cranberries

1-2 apples or 1 apple and one pear cored and diced (keep the skin on)

Fruit of one orange and some of the orange zest

½ to 1 cup crushed pineapple

¼ cup to ½ cup sugar, sucanat or honey

Place all ingredients, only ¼ cup sugar, in a pot and simmer until berries begin to burst. Taste ... think about it ... add a little more sugar if desired. Cool and store in glass container

Be happy and be well, sing, dance and play, remember to eat your veggies and have a joyous holiday.

Dr. Laura L. Shook is a chiropractor with an office located near downtown Wichita KS. She can be reached by phone at (316)267-6522 or by email to goodrlaura@cox.net