

Go red to manage pain

Tart cherries may help reduce chronic inflammation, especially for the millions of Americans suffering from joint pain and arthritis, according to research from Oregon Health & Science University. The researchers suggest tart cherries have the “highest anti-inflammatory content of any food” and can help people with osteoarthritis manage their disease.

In a study of women ages 40 to 70 with inflammatory osteoarthritis, the researchers found that drinking tart cherry juice twice daily for three weeks led to significant reductions in important inflammation markers—especially for women who had the highest inflammation levels at the start of the study.

Often thought of as “wear-and-tear” arthritis, osteoarthritis is the most common type of arthritis. Athletes are often at a greater risk for developing the condition, given their excessive joint use that can cause a breakdown in cartilage and lead to pain and injury, according to the Arthritis Foundation.

Along with providing the fruit’s bright red color, the antioxidant compounds in tart cherries—called anthocyanins—have been specifically linked to high antioxidant capacity and reduced inflammation, at levels comparable to some well-known pain medications.

Available every day of the year in dried, frozen, and juice forms, tart cherries are a versatile ingredient to include in any training or inflammation-fighting diet.

