

Hello.

The purpose of the JBA website is to provide latest news and information about health research relevant to blackcurrants. Where the information comes from other parts of the world the JBA team translates that research for this website. But the blackcurrant is not only the subject of much research; it is also used around the world as an important food and beverage in many cultures. In these Columns I will share with you some information about this pleasurable 'perspective' of the blackcurrant as well as, from time to time, information about the latest research. **Bill Floyd, Advisor, Japan Blackcurrant Association:**

## Scandinavian Research and Blackcurrants.

Over the next few months I am going to focus on the work of Scandinavian scientists and their work on blackcurrants. Scandinavia comprises the countries of Finland/Sweden/Norway/Denmark/Iceland. Scandinavians are globally respected for their strong belief in the relationship between good health and good foods. Berries are an integral part of this culinary culture and so it is natural that berries are the subject of much scientific research.

Research by scientists from Finland and especially the University of Eastern Finland (UEF) have looked at research very relevant to today's global health issues: at a time when Covid 19 is first and foremost in everyone's mind it is important to remember that a person's general medical condition would appear to influence the severity of a Covid infection on their health; and Metabolic Syndrome (and manifestations of it such as diabetes) possibly one such health issue.

Therefore the conclusions of a recently published work of a UEF team (Jenni Lappi, Kaisa Raninen, Kati Väkevainen, Anna Kårlund, Riitta Törrönen, Marjukka Kolehmainen), in the *British Journal of Nutrition* (2020; 1 DOI: 10.1017/S0007114520004468 ) should be of interest to all. To summarise:

**Blackcurrants are favourable to glucose metabolism:** Blackcurrants have a beneficial effect on the blood glucose response after a meal. They balance the glucose response of ingested sugar by attenuating its rise and delaying its fall. **Importantly** the research found that the required portion size of blackcurrants is much less than previously thought. Around 75gm of whole blackcurrants is all that is required.

This research follows other projects at UEF with the same focus:

**Törrönen, R**, Sarkkinen, E, Tapola, N, et al. (2010) Berries modify the postprandial plasma glucose response to sucrose in healthy subjects. *Br J Nutr* 103, 1094–1097.

**Törrönen, R**, Sarkkinen, E, Niskanen, T, et al. (2012) Postprandial glucose, insulin and glucagon-like peptide 1 responses to sucrose ingested with berries in healthy subjects. *Br J Nutr* 107, 1445–1451.

**Törrönen, R**, Kolehmainen, M, Sarkkinen, E, et al. (2012) Postprandial glucose, insulin, and free fatty acid responses to sucrose consumed with blackcurrants and lingonberries in healthy women. *Am J Clin Nutr* 96, 527–533.

**Törrönen, R**, Hellström, J, Mattila, P, et al. (2017) Postprandial glycaemic response to berry nectars containing inverted sucrose. *J Nutr Sci* 6, e4.

Of special interest to me is that 75gms of blackcurrants is all that is required to be effective. That is an amount easily consumed as part of a normal diet and can be from fresh or frozen berries: the naturally occurring anthocyanin polyphenols in the blackcurrants believed to be responsible are not affected by freezing. I asked the lead scientist for the project, Dr Jenni Lappi, if she would share one of her own blackcurrant recipes with us: her blackcurrant smoothie recipe follows.

**It is important for me to stress the following when I refer to research:**

- **Research can be indicative of possible values to humans but most current research requires significant more trials before values are proven.**
- **While research is being carried out people should simply enjoy blackcurrants as part of a balanced diet of many foods; especially fruits and vegetables.**
- **No-one should use the above information in any way to treat themselves without discussing first with their medical professional.**

### **Finnish scientist Jenni Lappi's favourite blackcurrant smoothie recipe**

(brimming with good health and delightful deliciousness I think!):

- 1.5dl blackcurrants (frozen or fresh)
- 1.5dl unflavoured yoghurt
- 0.5dl strawberries
- Half a small apple (cored but peel left on)
- 1-2 Tbsp honey or sugar
- 1 Tbsp oatflakes or bran



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