

BULLETIN

BERRY GOOD JUICE

Scientists have isolated the compound in cranberry juice that fights urinary tract infections (UTIs). Researchers presenting at the American Chemical Society's annual meeting grew *E. coli* bacteria in solutions containing various concentrations of cranberry juice. They found that the juice may prevent infection by crushing tiny hairs on the bacteria's surface so they can't attach to cells in the urinary tract. "Cranberries contain a class of [chemical] compounds known as tannins that may be what makes the *E. coli* non-adhesive," says study author Terri Camesano. Researchers are now exploring the potential of a UTI vaccine.

SPICE IS NICE

As if you needed an excuse to order Indian: Compounds in curry and onions may reduce your risk of colon cancer, according to a study in the journal *Clinical Gastroenterology and Hepatology*. Researchers recruited five patients with familial adenomatous polyposis, a hereditary disorder that leads to colon cancer, and gave them each 480 milligrams of curcumin (part of the curry herb turmeric) and 20 milligrams of quercetin (a compound in onions) three times a day for an average of 6 months. By the end of the trial, the patients had 60 percent fewer polyps (bits of tissue that are precursors of cancerous tumors). A larger study is in the works to determine the most beneficial dose.

» **Grainy Goodness** You know whole grains are better than refined for fighting flab and staying regular. Turns out **whole grains may also help reduce your blood pressure**, according to a small study published in the *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*. Researchers put 23 people on a diet for three 5-week periods, replacing refined carbohydrates with whole wheat, brown rice, or barley. The subjects' blood pressure levels dropped between 1.4 and 6.7 points no matter which whole-grain diet they tried. "We don't yet know which component is responsible for the benefit. Whole grains are high in fiber, phytosterols [cholesterol-lowering plant chemicals], and minerals, all of which could play a role," says study author Kay Behall, Ph.D. The USDA recommends at least three servings of whole grains per day, but the average American gets less than one. Up your intake and protect your heart by switching to whole-wheat bread and brown rice and looking for barley, oats, bulgur, and other grains at the grocery store.



Go fish.

» **Kidney Karma** Belly up to the sushi bar: **Eating fatty fish can reduce your risk of kidney cancer**, according to a study in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*. Researchers surveyed 61,433 women on their food consumption in 1987 and again in 1997 and found that those who ate salmon, herring, sardines, or mackerel at least once a week during that period had a 74 percent decreased risk of kidney cancer. This is probably because these fish contain such high levels of omega-3 fatty acids (20 to 30 times the amount found in leaner fish) and vitamin D (three to five times more), says study author Alicja Wolk, M.D. "Don't be scared of the term 'fatty fish'—these are good fats, and the health benefits outweigh any extra calories." Keep your kidneys healthy by eating one to two servings of fish high in omega-3s per week.



Slick.

» **Like a Virgin** Sure, olive oil ought to be a pantry staple, but should you splurge on the fancy stuff? Yes, if you want to treat your ticker right: **Virgin olive oil is the best kind for heart health**, according to a study in the *Annals of Internal Medicine*. Researchers asked 200 volunteers to replace all their fats with one type of olive oil (virgin, refined, or regular, which is a mix of the two) for 3 weeks and took blood samples before and after the trial. Those who used the virgin oil—highest in polyphenols (plant chemicals that may fight cardiovascular disease)—saw the biggest decrease in the ratio of bad to healthy cholesterol. "Virgin olive oil is one of the only vegetable oils that is not submitted to a refining process where polyphenols are lost," says study author Maria Isabel Covas, Ph.D. To stay skinny, stick to 2 tablespoons a day.



No pressure.



Caffeine content per

16-oz serving of decaf

Krispy Kreme

13.9 mg

Starbucks

12 to 13.4 mg

McDonald's

11.5 mg

Dunkin' Donuts

10.1 mg

Folgers Instant

None

Dubious Decaf

Alert! Too much decaf may make you jittery. "Five to 10 cups of decaf could equal a cup or two of [caffeinated coffee]," says Bruce Goldberger, Ph.D., coauthor of a study in the *Journal of Analytical Toxicology*. Compare the caffeine in the decaf above with the 100 milligrams in an average cup o' regular.