

## Why Does Cranberry Work So Well for Bladder Infections?

Cranberry is a fruit native to North America. It typically grows in bogs, and commercial production is mainly performed in Massachusetts and Wisconsin.

For ages, cranberry has been used for the prevention and treatment of urinary tract infections. Research suggests that it prevents bacteria from adhering to host cell surface membranes. It was used by Native Americans to treat ailments of the bladder and kidneys. The cranberry was documented in the 17th century as a treatment for several ailments, including:

- \* Blood disorders
- \* Liver problems, vomiting and stomach ailments
- \* Loss of appetite
- \* Scurvy
- \* Cancer

Cranberry was used as an effective treatment for urinary tract infections long before antibiotics were invented. It is still recommended by physicians to be used in conjunction with a prescribed round of antibiotics for treating bladder infections.

### Important Facts

Statistically, one in every five women in the United States suffers from bladder infections in her lifetime. Three percent of these women suffer from recurrent urinary tract infections (UTIs). Approximately 11 million women each year receive medications to treat UTIs. Studies show that women with a history of bladder infections can reduce the frequency of those infections by regularly drinking cranberry juice.

There have been no significant reactions discovered between cranberry and prescription drugs. Drinking cranberry juice a minimum of three times per day during treatment of a bladder infection will increase the need to urinate. This helps your body to rid itself of the infection through ingestion and expulsion of fluids.

### Pharmacology of Cranberry

The use of cranberry for medicinal purposes has been the subject of many scientific discussions. At first, it was thought that acidification of the urine assisted in creating an antibacterial effect. However, the primary reason that cranberry works so well for treating bladder infections is its prevention of bacterial adhesion to cell walls. It also prevents adherence by other gram-negative uropathogens that cause infection. Cranberry's ability to inhibit the adherence of bacteria has been shown through in vitro research.

### Other Uses

One study showed that the same property in cranberry juice that prevents bladder infections also aids in dental plaque prevention. Additionally, cranberry has been discovered to be a recommended treatment for Candida (yeast) infections.

Further in vitro studies show that cranberry has an inhibiting effect on certain types of fungi. However, there are no human trials that indicate its effectiveness in treating fungal infections when used alone.

### Symptoms of a Bladder Infection

The most common symptom of an oncoming bladder infection is feeling a constant, urgent need to empty the bladder. This feeling is present even when there is little or no fluid in the bladder. Other symptoms may include:

- \* Frequent urination
- \* Dysuria (burning or painful urination)
- \* Bladder spasms
- \* Cloudy urine
- \* Bloody urine
- \* Foul-smelling urine

\* Mild fever

A bladder infection that has gone untreated for an extended period of time could turn into a kidney infection. This brings with it much more serious symptoms which may include fever, chills and nausea. You may also experience cloudy or bloody urine, painful urination and abdominal pain. A common telltale sign of kidney infection is back pain just above the waist.

If you are experiencing any of these symptoms, it is wise to contact your physician. Bladder infection symptoms will not go away by themselves. They will continue to worsen, and your infection will become much more serious. Treatment for bladder infections is quick and easy. The sooner you begin the better.

If you suspect that you are about to experience a bladder infection, begin a regimen of drinking cranberry juice or supplement at least three times a day and make an appointment with your doctor.

#### Preventing Bladder Infections

There are several precautions you can take to prevent bladder infections. Some may seem obvious or silly, but after your first infection you will think very differently. Some of these precautions include:

- \* Wipe from front to back after urination or a bowel movement. This prevents the spread of bacteria.
- \* Go to the bathroom frequently. Holding urine in the bladder for long periods of time invites an infection.
- \* Keep the genital area clean and dry. Avoid prolonged moisture in the area.
- \* Avoid frequent bubble baths. They can cause vaginal irritation.
- \* Try to urinate soon after sexual activity. If lubricants are used, use only those that are water-soluble.
- \* Underwear with a cotton crotch will aid in infection prevention as well.

Drink a lot of water throughout the day. Also, drink cranberry juice or cranberry supplement to keep the urine acidic. This will prevent natural bacteria from multiplying as frequently, thus avoiding bladder infection.

#### About the Author

More information on [cranberry extract](#) is available at VitaNet &reg;, LLC Health Food Store. <http://vitanetonline.com/>

Source: <http://www.healthcrazed.com>