



Goji Berry for Skin, the Long-Lived Anti-Aging Fruit

Legend has it that Buddhist monks discovered goji berries hundreds of years ago when they were roaming the Tibetan mountains. The ones who found them first and ate them, and those who later incorporated them into their daily diet, supposedly lived longer than those who didn't. Goji berries have since had a reputation for delaying mortality. We don't have any reputable studies saying they actually work, but we do know that berries are antioxidant powerhouses and are full of nutrients, amino acids, carotenoids, and polysaccharides that make this ingredient a no-brainer for anti-aging skin formulas.

A Little Bit About the Ingredient Itself

The goji berry plant is also known as the "wolfberry" plant, and is a woody shrub native to Asia, particularly China. Botanically called "Lycium barbarum," the plant species is in the same family as the potato, tomato, eggplant, nightshade and tobacco. They prefer well-drained soil of moderate quality, and have an extensive root system that resists drought conditions once established. They like full sun.

Leaves are egg-like, with blunted or round tips. The flowers grow in groups of one to three, are trumpet-shaped, purple or white, and bloom from June through September. Fruits are bright orange-red, elliptical-shaped berries that have anywhere between 10-60 tiny yellow seeds inside. They ripen July and October, but as they spoil easily, they have to be harvested very carefully. They're said to have a sweet and slightly tart flavor—a combination of cranberries and cherries—and are often preferred dried and cooked.

Internal Health Benefits of Goji Berries

The goji berry's reputed ability to help preserve long life was recorded in China's first herbal encyclopedia, "Shen Nong's Materia Medica," written in the first century B.C. The goji was classified as a "superior tonic," in a class of herbs that people should take on an ongoing basis to preserve youth and promote general well being of life.

Goji was also used to strengthen the liver, purify the blood, protect healthy vision, and revitalize energy. More recent research has found that the berries are high in antioxidants, which can boost the immune system and help protect from illnesses like heart disease. They're also rich in vitamin A, which are known to help maintain healthy vision.

Some laboratory studies have shown that the antioxidants in goji may reduce blood sugar levels, and lower bad cholesterol. More studies are needed, but the research so far shows promise with goji berries for potential diabetes and heart disease treatments or prevention.

Note: Goji berries have some anti-coagulant properties, so it may be best not to combine them with blood-thinning drugs.

Goji's Benefits to the Skin

The most exciting benefit from goji berries is its anti-aging potential. Here are some of the reasons why scientists have found this fruit to be important for maintaining healthy, youthful skin:

- **Minerals:** Goji berries contain 11 of the 22 essential dietary trace minerals, including calcium, potassium, iron, zinc, and selenium. Though each has different action, they all can help firm, tighten and plump the appearance of your skin.
- **Amino Acids:** Amino acids, at their essence can help smooth the look of your skin, and improve tone and color. They also help improve skin hydration. Best of all, they're non-irritating.
- **Vitamin C:** Goji berries contain a high amount of vitamin C, which is known to support firming and tightening and protect the skin from environmental stressors. It's also been shown to help reduce the appearance of age spots.
- **Carotenoids:** These are flavonoids like beta-carotene, zeaxanthin, lutein, lycopene, cryptoxanthin, and xanthophyll. These protect and are known to help maintain a healthy glow in the skin.
- **Polysaccharides:** These components have antioxidant properties, firm and tighten and increase hydration.