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New Adventures

Winston J. Craig

Andrews University, wrcraig@andrews.edu

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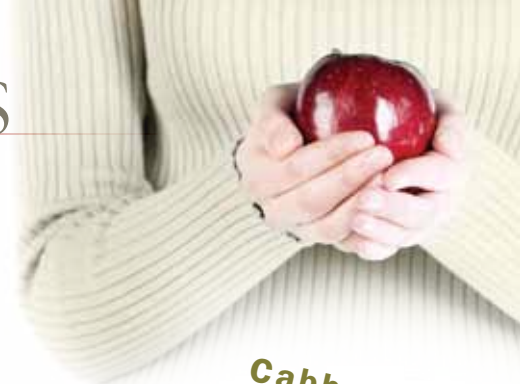
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Fruits and vegetables rich in pigments protect our health.



Cabbage family cuts cancer risk in half.

New Adventures

BY WINSTON J. CRAIG

Maybe it's time for you to be adventuresome and try something different this summer. For some of you, it may simply mean eating these nutritious foods more often to benefit from their health-promoting properties.

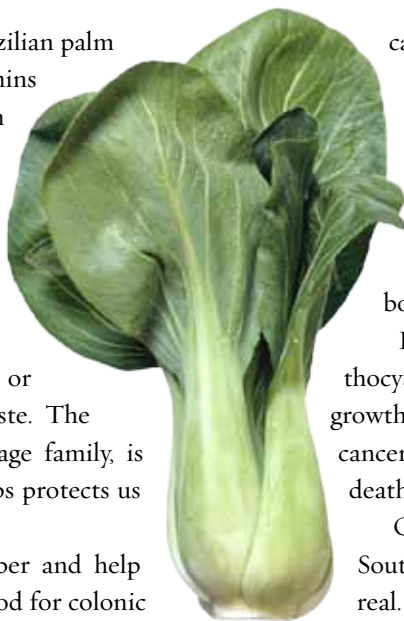
Açaí berries, the fruit of a large Brazilian palm tree, are rich in pigments (anthocyanins and polyphenolic compounds) which protect us against cancer. Açaí also can act as a vasodilator and has anti-inflammatory action. However, açaí does not increase your energy, provide a body cleanse or help with weight loss as many claim.

Arugula, also called "rocket" or "rocket salad," has a rich, peppery taste. The leafy green is a member of the cabbage family, is rich in vitamins and minerals, and helps protect us against colon cancer.

Black beans are rich in soluble fiber and help control blood sugar levels. They are good for colonic health and protect against colon cancer. The beans are rich in health-promoting anthocyanin pigments and other flavonoids, and hydroxyl-cinnamic acids that have chemopreventive properties. Black beans are a good source of folic acid, magnesium, iron, molybdenum and manganese.

Bok choy is a cabbage with a mild, sweet flavor. Its tender leaves are useful for soups and stir-fries. While low in calories, it is rich in vitamins A and K, potassium, iron, and calcium. Their isothiocyanates protect us against cancer.

Broccoli sprouts look like alfalfa sprouts and taste like radish. They are much richer in sulforaphane than the adult plant. Their antioxidant phytochemicals protect us against breast, prostate, stomach and colon cancer, and may also improve cardiovascular health. Women eating higher levels of broccoli, and other Brassica vegetables (cabbage,



cauliflower and kale) were 50 percent less likely to be diagnosed with breast cancer.

Guava is a delicious tropical fruit rich in soluble fiber, potassium, vitamin A, flavonoids and various polyphenolics. While the pink pulp is used for jam, juice and in fruit salads, the fruit peel of raw guava has both lipid-lowering and anti-diabetic activity.

Lychee fruit are rich in flavonoids and anthocyanins. These phytochemicals inhibit the growth, proliferation and invasiveness of breast cancer cells. An extract of lychee fruit induces the death of cancer cells.

Quinoa, a plant from the Andes region of South America, is used as a nutritious grain cereal. It has good quantities of calcium and iron, is rich in flavonoids, and has been suggested to help in the battle against diabetes.

Red and brown lentils are loaded high with fiber, and help provide excellent control of blood glucose. Their use is associated with significant reduction of stomach and colon cancer. They can be used in soups and stews.

Tahini, or sesame paste, can be used as a spread and is also a major component of hummus. Commonly used in Middle Eastern and Indian cuisines, tahini is rich in healthy monounsaturated fat, and makes a sweet dessert when mixed with date syrup. Sesame and other lignans, similar to those found in flax, protect against cancer and may lower LDL cholesterol levels as well.

Winston Craig, Ph.D., RD, is a professor of nutrition at Andrews University.