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## **New Research Suggests Wild Blueberries May Help Fight Alzheimer's Disease**

**PORTLAND, Maine — March 15, 2016** — Research presented at the 251<sup>st</sup> National Meeting & Exposition of the American Chemical Society (ACS), the world's largest scientific society, revealed that blueberries could help prevent the devastating effects of Alzheimer's disease. Robert Krikorian, Ph.D., a leading cognition researcher and the Director of the Division of Psychology and Professor of Clinical Psychiatry at the University of Cincinnati College of Medicine, led the research team at the University of Cincinnati Academic Health Center. Krikorian is also a long time participant in the Wild Blueberry Association of North America's Health Research Summit, a 19-year gathering of scientists and researchers from across the globe whose work is spearheading the understanding of the health benefits of wild blueberries.

According to Dr. Krikorian in [a press release from the American Chemical Society](#), "our new findings corroborate those of previous animal studies and preliminary human studies, adding further support to the notion that blueberries can have a real benefit in improving memory and cognitive function in some older adults." He adds that blueberries' beneficial effects could be due to flavonoids called anthocyanins, which have been shown to improve animals' cognition.

“The Wild Blueberry Association of North America was excited to partially support this important research,” said Kit Broihier, MS, RD, nutrition advisor to the Wild Blueberry Association of North America. “Wild Blueberries are especially rich in antioxidants and anthocyanin – a highly concentrated flavonoid in the deep blue pigment of the fruit. Antioxidants have been found to protect against inflammation, which is thought to be a leading factor in brain aging, Alzheimer’s disease, and other degenerative diseases. Wild Blueberries have twice the antioxidant capacity per serving as their regular cultivated cousins.”

Krikorian and his team at the University of Cincinnati Academic Health Center conducted two studies, which were supported in part by the National Institute on Aging, the Wild Blueberry Association of North America (WBANA) and the U.S. Highbush Blueberry Council. WBANA contributed wild blueberries and production of freeze dried wild blueberry powder for one of the studies and supported ancillary studies to determine the levels of anthocyanins and their metabolites in the participants of both studies. One involved 47 adults aged 68 and older, who had mild cognitive impairment a possible indicator of Alzheimer’s disease.

Participants in the study were given a freeze-dried blueberry powder, equivalent to one cup of berries, or a placebo powder daily for 16 weeks. According to the American Chemical Society press release: Krikorian stated that, “there was improvement in cognitive performance and brain function in those who had the blueberry powder compared with those who took the placebo. The blueberry group demonstrated improved memory and improved access to words and concepts. There was also increased brain activity in the blueberry group according to magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) testing.

Additionally, the team conducted a second study that included 94 people aged 62 to 80 who didn’t have measurable cognitive decline, but had experienced some memory loss. The participants were divided into four groups – one receiving the blueberry powder only, the second receiving only fish oil, the third received both blueberry powder and fish oil and the fourth, a placebo. The blueberry powder used in this study was made of an equal blend of both wild blueberries and regular blueberries, Krikorian stated that, “The

results were not as robust as with the first study. Cognition was somewhat better for those with the powder or fish oil separately, but there was little improvement with memory.”

“The two studies indicate that blueberries may be more effective in treating patients with cognitive impairments, but may not show measurable benefit for those with minor memory issues or who have not yet developed cognitive problems,” noted Krikorian.

### **About the Wild Blueberry Association of North America**

The Wild Blueberry Association of North America (WBANA), founded in 1981, is a trade association of growers and processors of wild blueberries from Maine and Canada, dedicated to bringing the wild blueberry health story and unique wild advantages to consumers and the trade worldwide. WBANA is dedicated to furthering research that explores the health potential of wild blueberries and since 1997, has hosted the Health Research Summit in Bar Harbor, a worldwide gathering of scientists and researchers whose work is leading the way in learning more and more about the health benefits of wild blueberries. For news, recipes, and related health information about wild blueberries, visit [www.wildblueberries.com](http://www.wildblueberries.com). For the latest updates, read our [blog](#). Visit us on [Facebook](#) or on [Twitter](#).

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