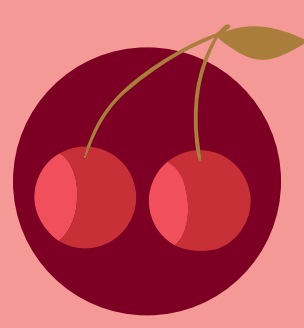




Winter GREETINGS!

As the holiday season is upon us and we prepare to ring in a new year full of novel adventures, goals, inspirations and opportunities, Northwest Cherry Growers would like to wish you a happy and healthy one. New Year's resolutions often involve making more healthy choices, and whether managing diabetes, tackling prediabetes or simply trying to reduce sugar intake, finding a balance during the holiday season and winter months can be a challenge. But that doesn't necessarily mean trading flavor for nutrition.

Northwest sweet cherries offer ample ways to add a tasty twist to favorite recipes while ensuring that the sweets consumed are fueling lasting energy, not pounds or sugar spikes. Sweet cherries are often thought of as a summertime treat, but the nutrient-dense morsels are worthy of year-round enjoyment. Reaching for preserved cherries — dried, frozen or canned — is an excellent way to tap the many health benefits of cherries even in the middle of winter. Stock up and have them at the ready for everything from breakfast smoothies and pastries to dinner salads and sauces.



Northwest sweet cherries: SWEETS YOU CAN EAT YEAR ROUND!

For people with diabetes, blood sugar levels can start to rise when temperatures start to drop. Colder weather naturally encourages spending more time indoors, which can make it challenging to maintain regular physical activity levels and can contribute to overeating. For those with diabetes, it is important to keep carbohydrates in check, and foods low on the glycemic index can help.

Sweet cherries boast a lower glycemic index than almost any other fruit. They release their sugars slowly, helping keep blood sugar levels steady and avoid pesky spikes. Additionally, the polyphenols in cherries appear to help diminish hyperglycemia, oxidative stress and inflammatory markers that are predictors of diabetes. Such qualities contribute to making sweet cherries one of the best fruits for people with diabetes.

Check out these delicious diabetic-friendly recipes:



**CHERRY STUFFED
GRILLED CHICKEN**



**CHERRY GRILLED
SWEET PEPPER SALAD**



**FRESH NORTHWEST
CHERRY SALSA**



Helpful hint:

When fresh fruits and veggies become sparse in the produce aisles, head to the freezer section. Incorporating frozen sweet cherries into everyday meals is an excellent way to access their vital nutrients year-round.

How can sweet cherries help with winter health?



Winter brings joyous holiday gatherings filled with delicious food and drink, but it also brings colder weather that can increase inflammation. Cold weather certainly doesn't cause arthritis, but it can exacerbate it. Frigid temperatures can heighten pain sensitivity, slow blood circulation and cause muscle spasms.

Sweet cherries can help keep pain at bay thanks to their anti-inflammatory properties. Sweet cherries contain anthocyanins, which appear to shut down enzymes that cause tissue inflammation in a similar manner to ibuprofen and naproxen.

In addition to arthritis, increased inflammation is an underlying cause for numerous chronic human diseases, such as diabetes, cancer, hypertension and cardiovascular disease. Biomarkers of these diseases and C-reactive protein, a common marker of inflammation, have been reduced in human studies of cherry consumption.

To learn more about the health benefits of sweet cherries and the studies that support these benefits, visit sweetcherryhealth.org.

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE ON THESE FUN TRUE/FALSE QUESTIONS:

1

TRUE OR FALSE?

Preserved sweet cherries maintain their nutrients when frozen or dried.

TRUE: Dried and frozen cherries provide most of the nutritional value of fresh cherries, and they are a great way to enjoy the flavors and health benefits all year long.

2

TRUE OR FALSE?

All fruit is off limits if you have diabetes.

FALSE: Fruit contains vitamins, minerals, fiber and carbohydrates, which makes it an excellent substitute for processed snacks such as cookies, chips and muffins that offer little nutritional value. Even high glycemic index fruits, such as bananas and watermelon, are safe in moderation.

3

TRUE OR FALSE?

Cherries boast a lower glycemic index than almost any other fruit.

TRUE: Sweet cherries boast a lower glycemic index than almost any other fruit. Cherries release glucose slowly and evenly, so blood sugar levels stay steady longer.

