

Do cranberries help prevent UTIs?

Clinical Question	Are Cranberry products effective and safe to use to prevent urinary tract infections (UTIs)?
Bottom Line	<p>The current body of evidence suggests that cranberry products (either in juice or as tablets or powder) compared to placebo or no treatment probably reduce the risk of symptomatic UTIs in women with recurrent UTIs, in children, and in people at risk of UTIs following an intervention.</p> <p>The data did not support the use of cranberry products to reduce the risk of symptomatic UTIs in elderly men and women, in pregnant women or in adults with neuromuscular dysfunction of the bladder and incomplete bladder emptying. However, data in these latter groups are limited to small studies with considerable uncertainty around the results.</p>
Caveat	<p>Only one small study compared cranberry tablets with cranberry juice and found that there may be little or no difference in efficacy between tablets and juice. However, comparisons of cranberry juice or tablets or powder with placebo or control raised the possibility that tablets may be more effective than juice because almost all point estimates suggested a greater benefit with tablets in the various populations taking tablets compared with placebo or control.</p> <p>It also remains unclear what the optimum dose of cranberry should be.</p>
Context	<p>Cranberries (particularly in the form of cranberry juice) have been used widely for several decades for the prevention and treatment of UTIs. Cranberries contain quinic acid, malic acid and citric acid as well as glucose and fructose. Current theory suggests that cranberries prevent bacteria (particularly <i>Escherichia coli</i>) from adhering to the uroepithelial cells lining the bladder wall.</p>
Cochrane Systematic Review	<p>Williams G, Stothart CI, Hahn D, Stephens JH, Craig JC, Hodson EM. Cranberries for preventing urinary tract infections. Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews 2023, Issue 11. Art. No.: CD001321. DOI: 10.1002/14651858.CD001321.pub7. This review contains 50 trials with a total of 8857 participants.</p>

Pearls No. 739, January 2024, written by Assoc Professor Vanessa MB Jordan.

Systematic review link:

<https://www.cochranelibrary.com/cdsr/doi/10.1002/14651858.CD001321.pub7/full>