

new report: aussies missing out on an apple a day

Health professionals are concerned that marketing hype is confusing Australians when it comes to affordable food choices. Launching a new report, accredited practising dietitian Karen Kingham said Australians may be overlooking every day staples in their quest for superfoods.

“We looked specifically at antioxidants, and which foods Australians thought had the most. Despite the fact that the humble apple actually has more antioxidants than half a punnet of blueberries or a cup of strawberries, only 3% of Australians are aware of this,” said Ms Kingham.

Australians are most likely to mistakenly believe that half a punnet of blueberries (36%) has the highest amount of antioxidants, slightly ahead of a cup of tea (34%).

“The concern is that Australians are missing out on an affordable, convenient source of antioxidants because marketing hype has confused them. You have to pay around seven times more to get the same antioxidant capacity from blueberries and around four times more to get the same antioxidant capacity from strawberries,” said Karen Kingham.

The new report – **Apple Review 2009** – also outlines the latest science on the unique preventative health benefits of apples. “The science shows apples may reduce cancer risk, particularly for cancers of the colon, lung, and breast, as well as reduce the risk of heart disease, asthma and type II diabetes,” she said.

In the last year, two scientific papers published out of Cornell University investigated the role apples may play in breast cancer protection and found that apples can suppress the growth of human breast cancer cells in the test tube and reduce the size of tumours in rats.

“The high antioxidant capacity of apples is likely to be one of the reasons for their impressive disease fighting potential,” said Ms Kingham. “In particular, apples are high in phenols and flavonoids, two antioxidants that appear to have significant benefits.”

New consumer research shows only one in five (21%) Australians eat an apple a day, and nearly half (46%) only eat them once a week, less often or never.

“The science suggests that regular apple consumption – an apple a day or at least several apples a week – is needed for the disease protection benefits,” said Ms Kingham.

The evidence is mounting, an apple a day really can keep the doctor away.

Reference: Kingham, K. (2009) Apple Review 2009: A Nutrition and Health Update.

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