

Put the spring back in your step with black elderberries -Black elderberries could hold the key to staying well this spring-

Submitted by: Tiger White PR

Wednesday, 11 March 2009

Black elderberries have been clinically proven to reduce the symptoms of cold and flu and may be the solution to maintaining a healthy immune system this spring.

And with the recent news that many over-the-counter cough and cold medicines may be harmful to young children, black elderberries may be the solution for concerned parents.

At least 1 in 4 of us will contract a virus this spring and summer, so it is important that the whole family's immune systems are up to scratch². Air conditioned offices, stuffy school classrooms, planes and trains all increase the chances of coming down with a bug that our immune systems may not be prepared to fight off - but black elderberries could hold the key to springtime wellness.

In a recent randomised, double blind, placebo controlled study, black elderberry extract was shown to reduce the duration of influenza by around four days³. This study adds weight to earlier research which found that within three days, the symptoms of influenza were relieved in nearly 90 per cent of cases treated with black elderberry extract, compared to six days in the placebo group². And most recently, in an in-vitro study, black elderberry extract was also found to be 99 per cent effective against the H5N1 strain of Avian Flu 4. No other double blind, placebo controlled studies are known to have been conducted on the antiviral properties of natural remedies

Native to hedgerows in the UK, black elderberries are thought to contain a unique compound, which coats viruses and prevents them from penetrating and infecting healthy cells. Due to this 'coating' viruses, such as flu, are unable to replicate. The body's white blood cells are then able to ingest the infected cells, effectively removing the virus from the body.

Black elderberries also contain high levels of natural antioxidants known as flavonoids which help strengthen the immune system against attack. As the black elderberry has twice the antioxidant capacity of blueberries and significantly more than cranberries⁵ this dark purple berry may be the unsung hero of the English countryside – and is easily available as a liquid extract on the high street.

Expert immunologist and registered medical herbalist Dr Serene Foster says: "The recent news that many over-the-counter remedies are ineffective only serves to highlight the growing body of evidence for natural health solutions. Black elderberries have been traditionally used to help protect against a range of viral ailments, including colds and flu, because of their natural immune health properties. Research has confirmed that these dark purple fruits contain a unique compound which helps the immune system to fight back against viruses."

For more information and research on clinical trials on black elderberry visit the website www.blackelderberry.info.

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For further information please contact:

Joanne Jarvis / 020 7202 8520 / jo.jarvis@tiger-white.com
Lizzie Andrews / 020 7202 8520 / lizzie.andrews@tiger-white.com
Andrew Stevens / 020 7202 8520 / andrew.stevens@tiger-white.com

References:

- 1 <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/health/7917188.stm>
 - 2 2004 (Zakay-Rones)
 - 3 1995 (Zakay-Rones)
 - 4 2005 (Balsingham)
 - 5 As measured by Oxygen Radical Absorbance Capacity (ORAC) – the method of measuring antioxidant capacities of different foods.
- The values given for total ORAC are as follows:
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| Elderberries - Total-ORAC (umol TE/100 g) | 14,697 |
| Blueberries - Total-ORAC (umol TE/100 g) | 6,552 |