



## Cranberries to the rescue

*Cranberries, those little red berries native to North America, can help prevent recurrent urinary tract infection (UTIs) problems, it appears.*

This is particularly good news for women, who are more prone to the condition. Up to 60 per cent of women will experience UTI at some point in their life. Highest at risk are young women who are sexually active, the pregnant, and those older than 55, especially if living in a nursing home.

### what's in a cranberry?

Unlike antibiotics, which kill bacteria, cranberries stop the bacteria adhering to the lining of the urinary tract where they would cause the infection to take root. The bacteria is simply swept away in the urine.

Proanthocyanidins, a family of phytochemicals found in cranberries and other red and purple fruits and vegetables, is the active agent. However, of all the foods tested, only blueberries and lingonberries (common in Finland) appear to have a similar effect as does cranberries on the urinary tract.

Cranberries also look

promising to help with gum and gastrointestinal infections.

### how much is enough?

Studies show that daily amounts of 50-300 ml of cranberry juice or cranberry juice cocktail (a commercial drink based on juice, water and sugar) taken over six months, help maintain a healthy urinary tract. Cranberry extracts have also been used.

If you already have a persistent infection, however, you should seek help from your doctor. Urinary tract infections can pose a serious health issue in some people.

See page 48 for a tasty cranberry recipe idea.

