

Any Science Behind Acai Claims?

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The acai is a species of palm tree. It's cultivated for its fruit and superior hearts of palm. The fruit looks like a large blueberry, but beware of the seed, which is 80% of the fruit. Acai grows in bunches, similar to grapes.

Acai is rich in antioxidants, called anthocyanins. Anthocyanin is Greek for "blue plant", and is responsible for the red, purple, and blue hues in many fruits and vegetables. Foods richest in anthocyanins -- like blueberries, red grapes, red wine, and acai -- are strongly colored, ranging from deep purple to black. In 2008, a Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry confirmed acai anti-oxidants are effectively absorbed by the human body, helping to eliminate free radicals, reduce inflammation and enhance immune response.

Acai is marketed as a dietary supplement in forms of pills, juice, smoothies, instant drink powders and whole fruit. Just like miracle tonics touted by early American traveling peddlers, marketers of acai make claims that it can cure it all..." increased energy levels, improved digestion, detoxification, improved skin, weight loss, improved heart health, reduction of cholesterol levels, improved sleep and even improved performance in the bedroom! According to Mayo Clinic, there is insufficient scientific evidence to back these claims.

↑ **BUYER BEWARE!**

"There are no magical berries from the Brazilian rainforest that cure obesity"—only painfully real credit card charges and empty weight loss promises," said Connecticut Attorney General Richard Blumenthal. "For thousands of dieters, the quest for a miracle product has become a nightmare," said Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan. "Too often, consumers end up losing money – not weight – in these deals." Madigan filed three lawsuits in 2009 in the Cook County Illinois Circuit Court. Thousands of consumers have trouble stopping recurrent charges on their credit cards when they cancel free trials of acai products.

According to Health Watch, Canada consumers should beware that acai products that may contain sildenafil, a medication used to treat erectile dysfunction. Sildenafil should never be used by individuals taking any kind of nitrate drug, like nitroglycerine, as it can cause life-threatening low blood pressure.

Acai sounds exotic and is marketed as a super-food, but it doesn't perform miracles! Though acai consumption can contribute to your daily fruit intake and provide antioxidants, a healthy diet follows the guidelines of the food pyramid, not relying on any one super-food. And that's a fact. It's science!