



Healthcare Professionals Newsletter

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DRIED FRUIT AND PUBLIC HEALTH: WHAT DOES THE EVIDENCE TELL US?

50 DIETITIANS AND NUTRITIONISTS ENJOYED A STIMULATING WORKSHOP ABOUT TRADITIONAL DRIED FRUIT, ON 7TH JUNE IN LONDON. The workshop reviewed and challenged existing research evidence regarding dried fruit, helping to inform attendees further of the known and potential nutritional and health benefits associated with the consumption of dried fruits (see *table 1* for the programme).

Seven internationally respected speakers and chair provided informative presentations covering key topics that included: dried fruit composition; dried fruit consumption and the potential impact on health; satiety and dried fruit's potential contribution to weight management; phytochemical potential (putting antioxidants in perspective); and sugar and dental health, exploring research evidence verses current public health advice.

This was followed by an interactive round table discussion that provoked a number of challenging questions for current public health advice and highlighted some facts around dried fruit functionality that were either unknown by health professionals or misinterpreted. The full content from the day is being written up for publication, details of which will be made available through a future newsletter.

Key messages to emerge during the workshop

- Traditional dried fruit is a convenient form of fruit and being a useful fibre source, can count, in addition to current fruit and veg intakes, towards 5-a-day recommendations.
- In the UK, current intakes of dried fruit are very small, closer to half teaspoon (2-6g), a doubling of intakes would contribute to individual fibre intakes but would still have little impact on total sugars intakes in the diet.

Dental health

- Existing evidence on the role played by dried fruits on dental health does not reflect current opinion, with a lack of high quality research evidence to support the negative perceptions.
- Agreement by all speakers that there is a need for good quality research to determine exactly what the effects of dried fruits on dental caries may be. In particular since the current intakes of dried fruit in the UK are so small, it is fair to question if the current undue emphasis placed on advice about dried fruit and dental health within public health messaging might seem misplaced?
- See our previous newsletter for more on dried fruit and dental health facts. https://www.californiaprunes.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Dried-Fruit-and-Health-Newsletter_June-2017.pdf



A UNIQUE SEMINAR CONCERNING DRIED FRUIT

Dried fruit and public health: What does the evidence tell us?

7TH JUNE 2018, LONDON



"There was a surprising lot of new information presented and many surprising facts about dried fruit!"

- Delegate feedback

Sugar

- There is confusion around the differing types of dried fruits: traditional dried fruits contain no added/free sugars- being simply fresh fruit with water removed (see *figure 1*); and processed dried fruit snacks, contain added sugars and so are better considered as an alternative to confectionery.
- Total sugars intakes are not above recommended levels in the UK, it is the free sugars component that needs reducing in the diet (traditional dried fruit contains NO free sugars).

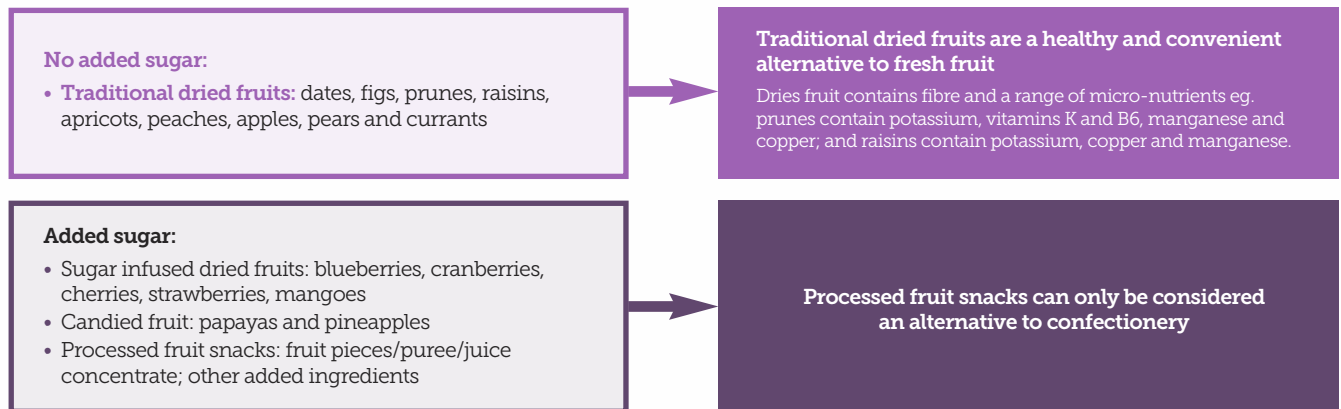
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Figure 1: Distinguishing dried fruits

Consumers are confused, many assume all dried fruit has added sugar and may not appreciate its potential to contribute to fibre intake.



Digestive Health

- Traditional dried fruit is a source of fibre. Fibre can help increase stool weight, stool frequency and short chain fatty acids; and some fibres act as prebiotics and can modify the microbiome.
- Prunes have an authorised digestive health claim in the EU – prunes contribute to normal digestive function with a daily intake of 100g.
- Studies exploring for the role of other dried fruits in digestive health is limited.

Appetite

- Studies suggest that snacking per se does not cause obesity.
- Dried fruits are sweet, tasty, a source of fibre, chewy and have a low/moderate GI, which are all properties that could help with appetite control.

Antioxidants and phytonutrients

- Antioxidants are diverse and whilst many phytonutrients are antioxidants this does not imply any health benefits – their mechanism of action in our bodies is complex, and benefits may occur by compounds working together synergistically with each other and other compounds in foods.
- Antioxidant assays (e.g. TRAP, TEAC and ORAC) indicate antioxidant content but not their function in the body.
- Dried fruit contains a wide range of phytonutrients, mainly in the form of polyphenols, and although composition is similar to its fresh fruit equivalent, all foods are unique.
- Prunes contain chlorogenic acid, 4-O-caffeoylquinic acid and 5-O-caffeoylquinic acid; and the phytonutrient content of raisins depends on the variety e.g. the most abundant flavonol in Thompson seedless 1 raisins is quercetin 3-O-rutinoside and in golden grapes is quercetin-3-O-glucoside.
- More research is needed on the specific contributions that consumption of individual dried fruits, each with their unique phytochemical profile, may be making to health.

Health Benefits of Traditional Dried Fruit

Traditional dried fruits historically have and can still today make a useful contribution to a healthy diet. They are a convenient addition to intakes of 5-a-day; with no added/free sugars they sit well with the recommended 5% of total energy (WHO¹ and SACN²); they contain protective phytonutrients; and their fibre content can help contribute to the hard to achieve 30g/d fibre recommendation and may also be useful for digestive health and satiety. Further research is now needed to bridge the gap between the clear nutrition and health benefits and the current negative public health dental advice which is not supported by good quality evidence.



Summing up the initiative, Simon Melik, Chairman of the NDFTA, who also spoke at the workshop, said...

"We are delighted with the enthusiastic response from delegates who attended the workshop and the positive feedback that we have received regarding the event's ability to provide a plethora of unbiased and highly credible information. We will also be working to identify important research requirements that will improve our understanding of how traditional dried fruits can make a positive contribution to public health."

*Simon Melik,
Chairman of the NDFTA*



Table 1: Programme

The 'Dried fruit and public health: What does the evidence tell us?' workshop was held on Thursday 7th June at The King's Fund, London. The event was hosted by the National Dried Fruit Trade Association (NDFTA) and supported by the California Prune Board, California Raisin Administrative Committee, Whitworths and Sun-Maid. Look out for details of publication in future newsletters.

Speaker	Talk outline
SIMON MELIK, Chairman, National Dried Fruit Trade Association (NDFTA)	Welcome
PROFESSOR JULIE LOVEGROVE, Director of Hugh Sinclair Unit of Human Nutrition, Deputy Director of the Institute for Cardiovascular and Metabolic Research, University of Reading (CHAIR)	Introduction to the workshop
SIGRID GIBSON MA MSc RNutr, Director, Sig-Nurture Ltd	Composition and classification of dried fruit, and contribution to intakes of fibre and sugars
PROFESSOR KEVIN WHELAN, Professor of Dietetics and Head of Department of Nutritional Sciences at King's College London	Dried fruit and digestive health
PROFESSOR GRAHAM FINLAYSON, Chair in Psychobiology, School of Psychology, University of Leeds	Dried fruit and appetite – the psychology of snacking (hedonic eating) in relation to obesity
PROFESSOR GARY WILLIAMSON, Professor and chair at the School of Food Science and Nutrition, University of Leeds	Antioxidants and phytonutrients in dried fruit and their potential to contribute to public health
DR MICHELE SADLER, Director, Rank Nutrition Ltd	Dried fruit and dental health – what is the evidence?
DR NIGEL CARTER OBE BDS LDS(RCS), CEO Oral Health Foundation, Chair of the Platform for Better Oral Health in Europe	What should dental health advice be for snacking - frequency of snacking, and should there be a distinction between dried and fresh fruit?
DR MARIE ANN HA, Senior lecturer, Faculty of Medical Science, Anglia Ruskin University, and Director of East Anglia Food Link	Consistency of public health advice for fruit and dried fruit

Workshop feedback

Feedback from speakers and delegates alike was very enthusiastic and the speakers recognised that dried fruits was an area ripe for more good quality nutrition and human health research.

- "Thanks for the invitation to be involved. It was an interesting afternoon and I learnt a lot!"
- "Thank you for including me in your excellent workshop."
- "It was a pleasure to be involved. I hope that things progress as there is much to do with traditional dried fruit."
- "Thank you for an informative session."
- "Very professional and excellent speakers."
- "As a public health dietitian and also volunteering at local food bank, where NO fresh foods available - families would welcome occasional dried fruit snacks."
- "I work with the elderly and dried fruit is really useful as a good high fibre convenient snack."

References:

1. World Health Organisation (2015) Guideline: Sugars intake for adults and children
2. Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (2015) Carbohydrates and health. Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition. London, TSO.
3. Moynihan P, Petersen P (2004) Diet, nutrition and the prevention of dental diseases. Public Health Nutrition. 7; 201-226.
4. Moynihan P (2002) Dietary advice in dental practice. British Dental Journal. 193; 563-568.



Microbiome Benefits of Dried Fruit and Nuts

Latest news from the International Nut and Dried Fruit Council (INC), discusses research on prunes, walnuts and almonds, and their beneficial effects on our gut microbiota. See <https://www.nutfruit.org/consumers/news/detail/want-to-improve-your-intestinal-health-eat-nuts-and-dried-fruits> for further details. This supports traditional dried fruits and nuts as being the perfect snack combination, with the added benefit of nuts (peanuts)³⁴, being protective to our teeth! See our delicious Dried fruit and nut trail mix recipe below.



Dried Fruit and Nut Trail Mix

Simply mix together a handful of one or a mix from each of the following groups and store in an airtight container. The options are endless!

- Any nuts – peanuts, walnuts, pistachios, almonds, cashews, hazelnuts or pine nuts
- California prunes quartered
- Raisins, sultanas, figs, dates, dried apricots, dried cherries, dried apple, goji berries, blueberries, mango or strawberries (Avoid any with added sugar).

We hope you found this newsletter useful and feel free to pass onto other colleagues. Have a question? Just email us at hcp@cpbeurope.eu

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