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NEWS

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The Nutritionist

DID you know that rainforest Indians eat about 200 different varieties of fruit? Consider the wide range of health-promoting nutrients these provide and how tragic it is these wonderful natural resources are on the verge of extinction from deforestation and climate change.

One fruit, called Camu-Camu, grows on bushes along the river banks of the Amazon. It has the highest vitamin C level of any known plant, about 30 times more vitamin C than an orange.

Camu-Camu also supplies betacarotene, vitamin B3 and B2, amino acids, absorbable iron and other minerals. In addition, the fruit contains bioflavonoids which enhance the effects of vitamin C.

Camu-Camu is collected in canoes when the fruit matures during the Amazon's flooding season. Fruit which falls into the water is a major food source for fish and birds. Local Peruvians tend to use it in sweetened drinks and ice creams as it has a rather sour taste.

Camu-Camu has become increasingly popular in supplement form as a potent source of vitamin C which is gentle on the stomach and easy to absorb.

Only four species of mammals, including humans, have lost the ability to produce their own supply of vitamin C. Yet we

MARTINA WATTS on a new source of vitamin C



need to obtain this crucial vitamin from our diet to fight disease: It helps to strengthen the immune system and fight bacterial and viral infections, makes collagen for healthy skin, joints and bones, detoxifies pollutants and makes anti-stress hormones.

As the body can't store it, it needs to be consumed every day.

Common deficiency signs of vitamin C include frequent colds and infections, low energy, bleeding or tender gums, easy bruising, nosebleeds and slow wound-healing.

The recommended daily amount for an adult is 60 mg - but this is based on the amount required to prevent death by scurvy. There is scientific evidence to show that an increased intake of vitamin C may reduce the risk of chronic diseases such as cancer, cardiovascular disease and cataracts, probably through antioxidant mechanisms.

We all have our own individual requirements depending on our diet, lifestyle and medical history. Lack of sleep, smoking, alcohol, pollution, stress and fried food all deplete levels of vitamin C.

In excess, the vitamin may cause loose bowels, although this stops once the dosage has been reduced. If on medication, consult your doctor before taking any high-dose vitamin C supplements.

Eating plenty of fruit and vegetables is the best way of obtaining adequate levels of vitamin C. However, fruit and vegetables can lose up to a quarter of their vitamin C content in less than a month after harvesting (even if frozen) and it degrades further during cooking and processing.

Camu-Camu from Rio Health is sourced from known growers and sustainably harvested. For more details, please visit www.riohealth.co.uk or call 01273 570987.

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