



## What is it?

The botanical name of cranberry is *vaccinium macrocarpon* and it belongs to the Ericaceae family.

The part of cranberry that is used medicinally is the fruit, which contains the following key active constituents – proanthocyanidins, also known as condensed tannins. Cranberry has a strong action on the urinary system.

Traditionally, cranberries have also been used for digestive upsets, liver problems, poor appetite and scurvy (due to the high vitamin C content).

## Why you may need cranberry

### Primary uses

**Urinary tract infections** (UTI's) such as [cystitis](#) – to prevent and treat recurrent UTI's. The proanthocyanidins interfere with the bacteria called *Escherichia coli* (E.coli), adhering to the urinary tract wall.

**Urinary odour** – cranberry juice can reduce urinary odours when given orally on a regular basis to patients with urinary incontinence.

### Other uses

Early studies suggest that cranberry may prevent adhesion of plaque bacteria that causes periodontal disease and prevent *Helicobacter pylori* (H.pylori) in the stomach.

## How much to use

UTI: For preventing UTI, clinical trials used 300 ml of 'cranberry juice cocktail' daily. Cranberry juice cocktail contains 30% pure cranberry juice and the remaining 70% is water, sugar or other juice such as apple. (Handy tip – 100% cranberry juice is available and this doesn't contain any added sugar).

Urinary deodoriser for incontinent patients: 100– 80 ml daily.



Cranberry is also available in tablet or capsule form based on the dosage of the juice. Products usually contain 10,000–17,000 mg of cranberry.

## Safety notes

Cranberry is generally well tolerated.

Large doses, for example 3–4 litres per day of cranberry juice can cause gastrointestinal upset and diarrhoea.

Kidney stones – cranberry juice or extract might increase the risk of kidney stones because of its high oxalate content.

Cranberries contain high amounts of salicylic acid. If you are sensitive to salicylates, avoid cranberries.

Doses of cranberry exceeding the amounts normally used in food should not be taken during pregnancy or while breastfeeding.

Always consult your healthcare professional if you are pregnant or breastfeeding.