

Abstract:

Strawberries are a source of many bioactive phytochemicals in the human diet. During the past decade, flavonoids, phenolic acids and related plant phenolics have gained much attention due to their antioxidant and other beneficial properties and their putative role in the prevention of chronic diseases like cancer and heart disease. Flavonoids present in strawberry include anthocyanins, flavonols, catechins and proanthocyanidins. Quantitatively, anthocyanins are the most important group. High content of ellagic acid (as ellagitannins) is a special feature of strawberry. Ellagic acid is known as a naturally occurring dietary antimutagen and anticarcinogen. Due to their high consumption, strawberries apparently are the main source of ellagic acid in the Finnish diet. Strawberry shows antioxidant activity in several in vitro assay systems. However, the antioxidant capacity of strawberry appears to be lower than that of many other edible berries. In animal experiments, strawberry has been found to inhibit oesophageal cancer and to reverse the course of neuronal and behavioural aging in rats.