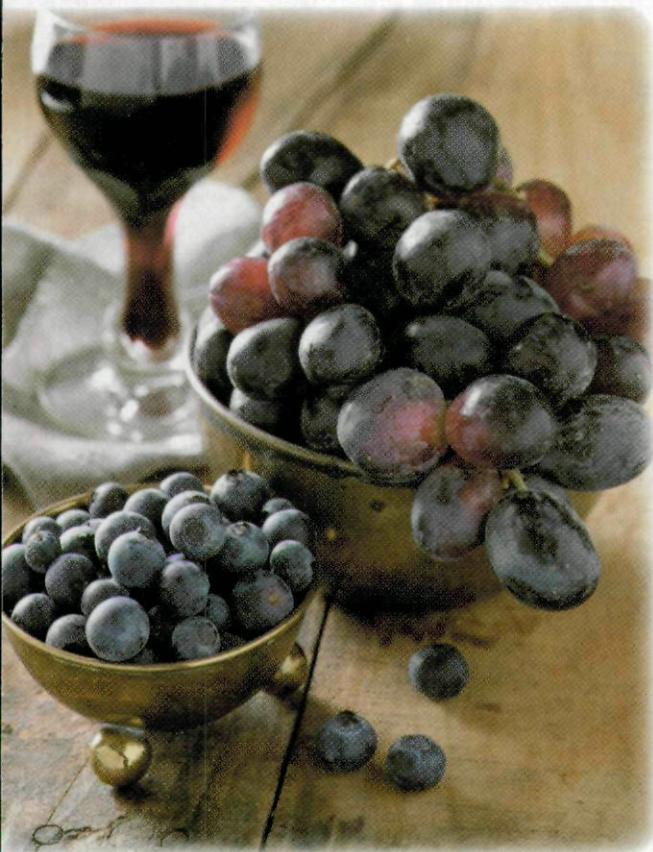


live longer with resveratrol



There's no magic wand for completely preventing aging or common diseases such as diabetes, but resveratrol supplements may be the next best thing

By Jack Challem

HOW RESVERATROL WORKS: Resveratrol increases the activity of SIRT1, a key gene involved in longevity in numerous species, including humans. By boosting SIRT1 activity, resveratrol has many collateral benefits in reducing the risk of age-related diseases, including diabetes, heart disease, and cancer. Unfortunately, almost all of the research has been done in test tubes, and with yeast, worms, fruit flies, fish, and mice—not people. That

activity of the SIRT1 gene. They also had lower levels of insulin-like growth factor-1, considered a risk factor for cancer. The mice also lived about 15 percent longer (the equivalent of 11 human years) compared with mice that were not fed resveratrol. Even with advancing age, the mice maintained physical activity and coordination more like that of younger mice. The benefits were all the more striking because the mice were fed the equivalent of a junk food diet.

- **Diabetes.** The Harvard University researchers also found that mice eating a high-calorie diet and taking resveratrol did not develop diabetes; however, animals not getting the antioxidant did develop the disease. In a small study of men with type 2 diabetes, resveratrol supplements reduced fasting blood sugar levels and improved insulin function. Diabetes is known to accelerate the aging process. A second study using resveratrol to treat people with diabetes is under way.

DID YOU KNOW?
Some reports suggest that muscadine grapes have a higher concentration of resveratrol than other types of grapes; muscadine grape juice and supplements are at health food stores.

said, the single human study with resveratrol found promising benefits.

HEALTH BENEFITS: Resveratrol seems to benefit several age-related health problems.

- **Antiaging.** In studies conducted at Harvard University, mice getting supplemental resveratrol had higher

THE BASICS: Resveratrol (pronounced res-vair-uh-traul) is an antioxidant found in small amounts in purple grapes, red wine, blueberries, and other fruits. What distinguishes it from all other antioxidants is its ability to promote health or longevity in a wide range of animals, from microscopic worms to human beings. In animal studies, resveratrol increases life expectancy—even when animals eat a junk food diet. It also appears to have some benefits in regulating blood sugar and reducing the risk of heart disease.

ALIAS: Resveratrol is a polyphenolic antioxidant, part of a large family of related chemicals found in the skin of fruits. Research originally focused on resveratrol extracted from red wine, but most resveratrol supplements now come from Japanese knotweed (*Polygonum cuspidatum*).

Product Examples (from left to right)

A few standouts in the resveratrol supplement category include Olympian Labs **CLINICAL RESVERATROL**, Jarrow Formulas **RESVERATROL SYNERGY** (with resveratrol, vitamin C, grape seed, and green tea extract), and Source Naturals **RESVERATROL**.



Photo by A. Jane Armstrong

- **Heart Disease.** Animal studies suggest that resveratrol may lower the risk of heart disease. Resveratrol has anti-inflammatory properties—important because heart disease is now considered an inflammatory disease of the arteries. Resveratrol may also prevent oxidation of cholesterol, regarded as an early step in the development of heart disease. Additionally, resveratrol has a mild blood-thinning effect, which would reduce the risk of blood clots.
- **Cancer.** Growing evidence suggests that resveratrol might have a role in cancer prevention. Resveratrol seems to prevent different stages of cancer growth and reduce cell division and metastasis, according to an article in *Cell Cycle*. Seven studies using resveratrol as an adjunct in the treatment of cancer in people are under way, but the results won't be known for several years.

resveratrol helps Bill manage his blood sugar

Bill was recently diagnosed with type 2 diabetes and was trying to control his blood sugar as much as possible with nutritional supplements. Several supplements proved helpful, including chromium, vitamin D, and biotin. However, he still needed to take a glucose-controlling medication prescribed by his physician.

Then Bill happened to read about resveratrol, an antioxidant that seems to increase longevity. He knew that diabetes would accelerate aging because of tissue damage from high levels of blood sugar and insulin. So he started taking resveratrol supplements, 100 mg in the morning and another 100 mg in the evening. To his pleasant surprise, his fasting blood sugar decreased 10 mg/dL, a change that moved him from being diabetic to prediabetic. Because of this improvement, he was able to lower his medication requirements.

BACKGROUND CHECK: Resveratrol was first isolated from plants in 1940. It didn't attract attention for its antiaging properties until the 1990s.

GLEANINGS: Fresh purple grape skins provide 50 to 100 mg of resveratrol per gram; one-quarter pound of grapes should provide more than 8,000 mg of resveratrol.

HEADS UP: The pharmaceutical industry is taking resveratrol very seriously. In 2007, drug giant GlaxoSmithKline paid \$720 million to buy Sirtris Pharmaceuticals. Sirtris researches resveratrol and has been trying to develop synthetic versions of the chemical.

WHAT YOU SHOULD TAKE: A recent study found impressive benefits from the equivalent of about 300 mg daily of resveratrol. That amount can still be pricey as a supplement, so a reasonable compromise might be taking 100 mg of resveratrol as a single supplement, or with a high-potency multivitamin or multi-antioxidant formula. ♦

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