Acai

url: https://www.nccih.nih.gov/health/acai  
  
Acai  
Common Names: acai, acai berry, a a   
  
Latin Names: Euterpe oleracea, Euterpe badiocarpa  
  
Background  
The acai palm tree, native to tropical Central and South America, produces a deep purple fruit. The acai fruit has long been an important food source for indigenous peoples of the Amazon region.  
Acai products have become popular in the United States, where they have been promoted for weight-loss and anti-aging purposes.  
The Federal Trade Commission has taken action against companies that marketed acai weight-loss products in allegedly deceptive ways.  
Acai fruit pulp has been used experimentally as an oral contrast agent for magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) of the digestive tract.  
How Much Do We Know?  
Very little research has been done in people on the health effects of acai products.  
What Have We Learned?  
There's no definitive scientific evidence based on studies in people to support the use of acai for any health-related purpose.  
No independent studies have been published in peer-reviewed journals that substantiate claims that acai alone promotes rapid weight loss. When investigating the safety profile of an acai-fortified juice in rats, researchers found no differences in body weight changes between animals given the juice and animals not given the juice.  
A preliminary study suggested that eating acai fruit pulp might reduce blood sugar and cholesterol levels in people who are overweight.  
Laboratory studies have focused on acai's potential antioxidant properties, and a juice blend with acai as the main ingredient has been shown to have an antioxidant effect in people. (Antioxidants are substances that may protect cells against certain types of damage.)  
What Do We Know About Safety?  
Acai pulp appears to be safe when consumed in the amounts commonly used in foods; however, drinking unprocessed acai juice has been linked to an illness called American trypanosomiasis (also known as Chagas disease).  
Consuming acai might affect MRI test results. If you use acai products and are scheduled for an MRI, check with your health care provider.  
Little is known about whether it s safe to use acai during pregnancy or while breastfeeding.  
Keep in Mind  
Take charge of your health-talk with your health care providers about any complementary health approaches you use. Together, you can make shared, well-informed decisions.  
For More Information  
Using Dietary Supplements Wisely  
Know the Science: How Medications and Supplements Can Interact  
Know the Science: How To Make Sense of a Scientific Journal Article  
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Website: https://ods.od.nih.gov  
  
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