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By Nina Pullman

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Eating blueberries 'improves reaction times'



Children who were given blueberry drinks had nine per cent quicker reaction times, new research has found

Children who eat blueberries have a nine per cent quicker reaction time to computer tasks, according to a new study by the University of Reading.

A group of seven to 10 year olds were given a drink containing wild blueberries or a matched placebo before being tested on their speed and accuracy on computer tasks.

The tasks involved watching a range of arrows on a screen and press a key corresponding to the direction of the central arrow.

Difficulty was manipulated by varying how quickly the arrows appeared, whether there were additional

arrows appearing either side of the central arrow, and whether the flanking arrows were pointing in the same/different direction as the central arrow.

The children were fed wild blueberries as they have a high level of natural flavonoid compounds, associated with health benefits including antioxidants and anti-inflammatory effects.

The double blind trial found that the children who consumed the flavonoid-rich blueberry drink had 9% quicker reaction times on the test without any sacrifice of accuracy. In particular, the effect was more noticeable as the tests got harder.

Neuroscience professor Claire Williams said: "This is the first time that we have seen the positive impact that flavonoids can have on the executive function of children. We designed this double blind trial especially to test how flavonoids would impact on attention in young people as it's an area of cognitive performance that hasn't been measured before."

Previous research from the University of Reading has shown that consuming wild blueberries can improve mood in children and young people as well as memory recall.

<http://www.fruitnet.com/americafruit/article/1474/parts-of-san-diego-quarantined-as-psyllid-count-mounts>

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