



21 Foods for a Healthy Prostate

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"If you want to have a healthy prostate there are some specific foods that you should eat more of..."

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1. Green tea - studies have found that green tea extracts prevent the growth of prostate cancer cells in test tubes.

In a large study conducted in Southeast China researchers found that the risk of prostate cancer declined with increasing frequency, duration and quantity of green tea consumption.

Green tea polyphenols halt prostate cancer at multiple levels

The polyphenols in green tea help prevent the spread of prostate cancer by mobilizing several molecular pathways that shut down the proliferation and spread of tumor cells, while also inhibiting the growth of blood vessels that supply the cancer with nourishment, according to research published in the December 2004 issue of *Cancer Research*.

Green tea polyphenols:

- Decrease insulin-like growth factor-1 (IGF-1), while increasing levels of IGF binding protein-3, which binds IGF-1, further diminishing its activity. (Increased levels of IGF-1 are associated not only with prostate cancer, but cancers of the breast, lung and colon.)
- Inhibit key cell survival proteins, promoting apoptosis or programmed cell death in cancer cells.
- Reduce the expression of several compounds (urokinase plasminogen activator and matrix metalloproteinase 2 and 9) involved in the metastasis and spread of cancer cells.
- Reduce the amount of vascular endothelial growth factor (VEGF), which develops new blood vessels to carry nutrients to developing tumors.

All these effects were seen in this animal study within 6 months of continuous infusion. While obviously impractical for humans, the study suggests that daily consumption of green tea may be highly protective.

2. Onion's and Garlic - Quercetin, a substance found in onions has shown outstanding anti-tumor properties, further underlining its positive effects in combating certain cancers including colon, prostate and breast cancer.

Onion and Garlic Protective against Many Cancers

Making onion and garlic a staple in your healthy way of eating may greatly lower your risk of several common cancers, suggests a large data set of case-control studies from Southern European populations (Galeone C, Pelucchi C et al, *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*).

Study participants consuming the most onions showed an: 71% reduced risk for prostate cancer compared to those eating the least onions.

Similarly, those eating the most garlic had a 19% reduced risk for prostate cancer compared to those eating the least garlic.

3. Soy - An international study determined that the men who ate the most soy products were the least likely to die of prostate cancer. People in the West have started adding more soy to their diets in recent years because numerous scientific studies have shown that some soy products offer health benefits.

These include lowering cholesterol and reducing a person's risk of heart disease and prostate cancer.

But be aware that the health claims you see made about soy are not necessarily for all soy foods - they just apply to soy *protein*. This means that only foods identified as being "whole soy," or foods that specify they contain soy protein, will offer these health benefits.

4. Legumes - There is limited evidence from observational studies that legume intake is inversely related to the risk of prostate cancer.

In a 6-year prospective study of more than 14,000 Seventh Day Adventist men living in the US, those with the highest intakes of legumes (beans, lentils or split peas) had a significantly lower risk of prostate cancer.

The soluble fiber in beans helps lower levels of damaging LDL cholesterol in the blood, thus lowering heart-disease risk.

And by slowing down carbohydrate absorption, soluble bean fiber fends off unwanted peaks and valleys in blood glucose levels -- especially valuable to people with diabetes.

Beans also provide substantial insoluble fiber, which can keep constipation and other digestive woes away.

Legumes are also rich in folic acid, copper, iron, and magnesium -- four nutrients many of us could use more of in our diets. In addition, dried beans and peas are generally good sources of iron, which is especially helpful for people who don't eat meat.

More recently, a prospective study of more than 58,000 men in the Netherlands found that those with the highest intakes of legumes had a risk of prostate cancer that was 29% lower than those with the lowest intakes

5. Whole grains - Phytosterols, especially sitosterol (which occurs in cereals) are considered to have a protective effect against the most common cancers in developed countries, including colon, prostate and breast cancer.

Whole grains contain many healthful components, including dietary fiber, starch, essential fatty acids, antioxidants, vitamins, minerals, lignans, and phenolic compounds, that have been linked to reduced risk of heart disease, cancer, diabetes, obesity, and other chronic diseases.

Since most of the health-promoting components are found in the germ and bran, foods made with whole grains can play an important role in maintaining good health.

When an adequate amount of whole grains are included in a healthy diet, there also is room for enriched grain food choices.

Eating more whole grains involves making relatively easy changes in grain food selections.

6. Broccoli - Eating more than one serving of broccoli and cauliflower a week may reduce the risk of prostate cancer by up to 45 per cent, says a new study from Cancer Care Ontario.

A study, published in *Cancer*, the journal of the American Cancer Society, looked at indole-3-carbinol (I3C), a naturally occurring component of Brassica vegetables, such as broccoli, cabbage, and Brussels sprouts.

I3C has been recognized as a promising anticancer agent against certain reproductive tumor cells.

This laboratory study evaluated I3C's effects on cell cycling progression and cancer cell proliferation in human prostate cancer cells.

I3C was shown to suppress the growth of prostate cancer cells in a dose-dependent manner by blocking several important steps in cell cycling and also to inhibit the production of prostate specific antigen (PSA), a protein produced by the prostate whose rising levels may indicate prostate cancer.

Researchers noted that the results of this study demonstrate that "I3C has a potent antiproliferative effect" in human prostate cancer cells, which qualifies it as "a potential chemotherapeutic agent" against human prostate cancer.

Cruciferous Vegetables Help Lower Risk of Certain Aggressive Prostate Cancers

Researchers from Canada and the U.S. evaluated the association between prostate cancer risk and intake of fruits and vegetables in 29,361 men in the Prostate, Lung, Colorectal and Ovarian Cancer Screening Trial.

While there was no relationship found between overall prostate cancer risk and fruit and vegetable consumption, there was a relationship found between aggressive stage III and stage IV cancers that had expanded beyond the prostate gland (called extraprostatic prostate cancers) and vegetable intake.

Consuming at least one weekly serving of cruciferous vegetables was associated with a near 40% reduction in risk of stage III and stage IV tumors risk, with broccoli and cauliflower offering the most protection.

Men eating broccoli more than once a week were 45% less likely to develop stage III and IV prostate cancers, and eating cauliflower more than once a week conferred a 52% reduction in stage III and stage IV prostate cancer risk. (Kirsh VA, Peters U, et al., *J Natl Cancer Inst.*)

7. Cauliflower Sprouts - researchers from Canada and the US reported that an increased intake of cruciferous vegetables was associated with a 40 per cent reduction in prostate cancer risk, with broccoli and cauliflower sprouts singled out as offering most protection.

Recent studies show that those eating the most cruciferous vegetables have a much lower risk of prostate, colorectal and lung cancer-even when compared to those who regularly eat other vegetables:

In a study of over 1,200 men, conducted at the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center in Seattle, WA, those eating 28 servings of vegetables a week had a 35% lower risk of prostate cancer, but those consuming just 3 or more servings of *cruciferous* vegetables each week had a 44% lower prostate cancer risk.

A Weekly Serving of Cruciferous Vegetables Halves Advanced Prostate Cancer Risk

A study of 29,361 men, enrolled on the Prostate, Lung, Colorectal and Ovarian Cancer Screening Trial found that men who ate more than a serving of either broccoli or cauliflower each week almost halved their risk of developing advanced-stage prostate cancer (cancer that had spread beyond the prostate gland), compared with their peers who ate these vegetables less than once a month.

Compared to men eating broccoli just once a month, those eating a weekly serving, lowered their risk of advanced prostate cancer by 45%.

Cauliflower was even a bit more protective. Compared to men eating one serving of cauliflower per month, those enjoying a weekly serving lowered their risk of advanced prostate cancer by 52%. (Kirsch VA, Peters U. et al., *J Natl Cancer Inst.*)

8. Tomatoes - In a study of over 40,000 health professionals, Harvard investigators found that men who ate more than 10 servings tomato-based foods daily (like cooked tomato's and tomato sauce,) had a 35 percent lower risk of developing prostate cancer than those who ate the least amount of these foods. The benefits of Lycopene were more pronounced with advanced stages of prostate cancer.

Broccoli and tomatoes-two vegetables separately recognized for their cancer-fighting capabilities-are even more successful against prostate cancer when working as a team in the daily diet, shows a study published in *Cancer Research*.

"When tomatoes and broccoli are eaten together, we see an additive effect. We think it's because different bioactive compounds in each food work on different anti-cancer pathways," said John Erdman, Professor of Food Science and Human Nutrition at the University of Illinois.

Starting one month before male rats were implanted with prostate tumors, Erdman and doctoral candidate Kirstie Canene-Adams fed the animals one of 5 different diets. Then they compared the cancer-preventive effects of the diets to treatment with finasteride, a drug commonly prescribed for men with enlarged prostates, or surgical castration.

The diets contained one of the following: 10% tomato, 10% broccoli, 5% tomato plus 5% broccoli, 10% tomato plus 10% broccoli, or lycopene (23 or 224 nmol/g diet).

The tomato and broccoli given as powders made from the whole vegetable to compare the effects of eating the whole food to simply consuming one active compound as a nutritional supplement- in this case, lycopene, a carotenoid found in tomatoes.

After 22 weeks, when the rats' were sacrificed and their prostate tumors weighed, the 10% tomato/broccoli combination was shown to greatly outperform all other diets, shrinking prostate tumors by 52%.

Broccoli alone decreased tumor weight by 42%, and tomato alone by 34%.

Lycopene alone (23 or 224 nmol/g diet) came in last, reducing tumor weight by 7% and 18% respectively.

Only castration-a last resort option for most men, although it resulted in a 62% reduction in prostate tumor weight-approached the level of protection delivered by the tomato/broccoli diet.

Said Erdman, "As nutritionists, it was very exciting to compare this drastic surgery to diet and see that tumor reduction was similar."

"Older men with slow-growing prostate cancer who have chosen watchful waiting over chemotherapy and radiation should seriously consider altering their diets to include more tomatoes and broccoli," said Canene-Adams.

To get the prostate health benefits seen in this study, a 55-year-old man would need to consume 1.4 cups of raw broccoli and 2.5 cups of fresh tomato, 1 cup of tomato sauce or ½ cup of tomato paste daily, said Canene-Adams.

Erdman noted that this study shows eating whole foods is better than taking isolated nutrients.

"It's better to eat tomatoes than to take a Lycopene supplement-and cooked tomatoes may be better than raw tomatoes. Chopping and heating make the cancer-fighting constituents of tomatoes and broccoli more bioavailable," he said.

Practical Tips: While the phytonutrients in tomatoes become more concentrated when they are cooked into a sauce or paste, and more bioavailable when eaten with a little oil, those in broccoli will be greatly reduced if this vegetable is overcooked. Steam or healthy sauté broccoli no more than 5 minutes.

Why don't you try to grow your own Tomatoes? I know from experience they are very easy to grow and taste delicious – ten times better home grown than the supermarket variety!

9. Olive Oil - A pill made from olive oil and herbs could dramatically reduce a man's chances of developing prostate cancer.

A trial at Columbia University in the US revealed the herbal supplement can reduce the rate at which prostate cancer cells grow and spread by nearly 80 per cent.

The results, published in the medical journal *Nutrition and Cancer*, appear to confirm anecdotal evidence that the herbal mixture has powerful anti-cancer properties.

Called Zyflamend, the supplement is based on olive oil and ten different herbs.

10. Fish and Fish Oil - Fish and omega 3 fish oil has been shown to help prevent three of the most common forms of cancer including breast, colon and prostate. It (Omega 3) stops the alteration from a normal healthy cell to a cancerous mass, inhibiting unwanted cellular growth and causing apoptosis, or cellular death, of cancer cells.

11. Fruit and Vegetables - A new University of Georgia study finds that pectin, a type of fiber found in fruits and vegetables and used in making jams and other foods, kills prostate cancer cells.

The study, published in the August issue of the journal *Glycobiology*, found that exposing prostate cancer cells to pectin under laboratory conditions reduced the number of cells by up to 40 percent.

In a study of over 1,000 men conducted at the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center in Seattle, WA, those eating 28 servings of vegetables a week had a 35% lower risk of prostate cancer, but those consuming just 3 or more servings of cruciferous vegetables each week had a 44% lower prostate cancer risk.

12. Avocados contain oleic acid, a monounsaturated fat that may help to lower cholesterol.

In one study of people with moderately high cholesterol levels, individuals who ate a diet high in avocados showed clear health improvements.

After seven days on the diet that included avocados, they had significant decreases in total cholesterol and LDL cholesterol, along with an 11% increase in health promoting HDL cholesterol.

Avocados are a good source of potassium, a mineral that helps regulate blood pressure.

Adequate intake of potassium can help to guard against circulatory diseases, like high blood pressure, heart disease or stroke.

In fact, the U.S. Food and Drug Association has authorized a health claim that states: "Diets containing foods that are good sources of potassium and low in sodium may reduce the risk of high blood pressure and stroke."

Not only are avocados a rich source of monounsaturated fatty acids including oleic acid, which has recently been shown to offer significant protection against breast cancer, but it is also a very concentrated dietary source of the carotenoid lutein; it also contains measurable amounts of related carotenoids (zeaxanthin, alpha-carotene and beta-carotene) plus significant quantities of tocopherols (vitamin E).

In a laboratory study published in the *Journal of Nutritional Biochemistry*, an extract of avocado containing these carotenoids and tocopherols inhibited the growth of both androgen-dependent and androgen-independent prostate cancer cells.

But when researchers tried exposing the prostate cancer cells to lutein alone, the single carotenoid did not prevent cancer cell growth and replication.

Not only was the whole matrix of carotenoids and tocopherols in avocado necessary for its ability to kill prostate cancer cells, but the researchers also noted that the significant amount of monounsaturated fat in avocado plays an important role.

Carotenoids are lipid (fat)-soluble, which means fat must be present to ensure that these bioactive carotenoids will be absorbed into the bloodstream. One cup of avocado has 23% of the Daily Value for folate, a nutrient important for heart health. Eat more Avocados'!

13. Nuts - Researchers at the University of Illinois say Cashews, Brazil Nuts, Walnuts, and Almonds may help prevent prostate cancer.

Eating a broad range of nuts is best as they each have specific health benefits

Another reason to eat more peanuts is because they're an excellent source of B vitamins, including folate, riboflavin and niacin. All of which are essential for healthy metabolism and growth; a deficiency of them can cause muscle degradation and fatigue.

Walnuts also have important benefits for your heart because of the omega 3 and omega 6 fatty acids they contain. Both omega 3 and omega 6 are also needed for maintaining healthy joints and brain function.

Another must are Brazil nuts. A recent study conducted at the University of Illinois in the US suggests that Brazil nuts may play a vital role in preventing breast cancer. According to the scientists who carried out the study, this benefit is probably a result of the high amounts of selenium they contain.

Selenium is a powerful antioxidant that helps neutralise harmful free radicals that can attack healthy cells and increase the risk of serious conditions like heart disease and cancer - including breast cancer as already mentioned, and lung, bowel and **prostate** cancer.

The list of health benefits attached to each individual nut is endless.

Other nuts that are particularly good include: pistachios for their high iron, protein and fibre content and high levels of magnesium, which helps control blood pressure/

Hazelnuts because they are one of the richest sources of the antioxidant vitamin E;

And cashew nuts for their high iron content which is needed to make haemoglobin - the red pigment in the blood.

Obviously it goes without saying that nuts should not be eaten by anyone with an allergy to them.

The British Nutrition Foundation recommends that if you have a family history of nut allergies you should avoid nuts when pregnant and should not give them to your children to eat in their early years.

14. Pumpkin Seeds May Promote Prostate Health

Benign prostatic hypertrophy, or BPH, is a condition that commonly affects men 50 years and older in the United States. BPH involves enlargement of the prostate gland.

One of the factors that contribute's to BPH is overstimulation of the prostate cells by testosterone and its conversion product, DHT (dihydrotestosterone).

Components in pumpkin seed oil appear able to interrupt this triggering of prostate cell multiplication by testosterone and DHT, although the exact mechanism for this effect is still a matter of discussion.

Equally open for discussion is the relationship between pumpkin seed oil extracts (which could be purchased in the form of a dietary supplement) and pumpkin seeds themselves.

The prostate-helpful components found in the oil extracts are definitely found in the seeds; the only question is whether the amount of seeds eaten for a normal snack would contain enough of these prostate-supportive components.

The carotenoids found in pumpkin seeds, and the omega-3 fats found in pumpkin seeds are also being studied for their potential prostate benefits.

Men with higher amounts of carotenoids in their diet have less risk for BPH; this is the connection that has led to an interest in pumpkin seed carotenoids.

Zinc is one further nutrient found in pumpkin seeds that might impact prostate function. The fact that pumpkin seeds serve as a good source of zinc may contribute to the role of pumpkin seeds in support of the prostate.

However, studies about the relationship between zinc and BPH show mixed results, and more research is needed to determine the circumstances under which zinc might be helpful versus harmful.

15. Spinach A carotenoid found in spinach and other green leafy vegetables fights human prostate cancer two different ways, according to research published in the *Journal of Nutrition*.

The carotenoid, called neoxanthin, not only induces prostate cancer cells to self-destruct, but is converted in the intestines into additional compounds, called neochromes, which put prostate cancer cells into a state of stasis, thus preventing their replication.

16. Whole Cranberries For cancer prevention enjoy whole cranberries, not just cranberry juice.

Cranberry presscake (the material remaining after squeezing juice from the berries), when fed to laboratory animals bearing human breast cancer cells, has previously been shown to decrease the growth and metastasis of tumors.

A new study published in the *Journal of Nutrition* suggests compounds in whole cranberries also inhibit prostate, skin, lung and brain cancer cells as well.

17. Carrots. Carotenoids and Prostate Health. The humble carrot is by far one of the richest source of carotenoids-just one cup provides 16,679 IUs of beta-carotene and 3,432 REs (retinol equivalents), or roughly 686.3% the RDA for vitamin A.

High carotenoid intake has been linked with a 20% decrease in postmenopausal breast cancer **and an up to 50% decrease in the incidence of cancers of the bladder, cervix and prostate!**

18. Red Chilli Pepper's Help Stop the Spread of Prostate Cancer

Red chilli peppers' capsaicin, the compound responsible for their pungent heat, stops the spread of prostate cancer cells through a variety of mechanisms, indicates a study published in the March 15, 2006 issue of *Cancer Research* .

Capsaicin triggers suicide in both primary types of prostate cancer cell lines, those whose growth is stimulated by male hormones and those not affected by them.

In addition, capsaicin lessens the expression of prostate-specific antigen (PSA), inhibits the ability of the most potent form of testosterone, dihydrotestosterone, to activate PSA, and directly inhibits PSA transcription, causing PSA levels to plummet.

The dose effective for test animals was equivalent to 400 milligrams of capsaicin, three times a week, for a man weighing about 200 pounds.

After four weeks of receiving capsaicin, prostate cancer tumor growth and size decreased significantly in the animals.

Be warned: Excessive intake of hot chillies has been linked to stomach cancer, so don't go overboard.

19. Apricots are a rich source of the carotenoid, lycopene. Choosing to eat lycopene-rich foods *and* regularly drink green tea may greatly reduce a man's risk of developing prostate cancer, suggests research published the *Asia Pacific Journal of Clinical Nutrition* (Jian L, Lee AH, et al.)

In this case-control study involving 130 prostate cancer patients and 274 hospital controls, men drinking the most green tea were found to have an 86% reduced risk of prostate cancer compared, to those drinking the least.

A similar inverse association was found between the men's consumption of lycopene-rich fruits and vegetables such as tomatoes, apricots, pink grapefruit, watermelon, papaya, and guava. Men who most frequently enjoyed these foods were 82% less likely to have prostate cancer compared to those consuming the least lycopene-rich foods.

20. Grapefruit. The rich pink and red colors of grapefruit are due to lycopene, a carotenoid phytonutrient. Lycopene appears to have anti-tumor activity. Among the common dietary carotenoids, lycopene has the highest capacity to help fight oxygen free radicals, which are compounds that can damage cells.

21. Watermelon. Recent studies have linked lycopene to reducing the risk of prostate cancer and lowering inflammation that may cause hypertension and heart disease.

A 180 gram (6.3 ounce) serving of watermelon is said to provide between 8 and 20 mg of lycopene, making it a rich source of the carotenoid.

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