

Prostate Cancer and Your Health

EAT TOMATOES, FIGHT PROSTATE CANCER

If you like to eat ketchup or pasta sauce and drink tomato juice you may be able to help your body fight prostate cancer. Eating two meals a week containing tomato products may lower your risk of prostate cancer by 24 to 36 percent.

Tomatoes contain lycopene, the chemical that gives tomatoes their red color. Lycopene is a powerful antioxidant that can protect the body from the effects of oxidative damage thought to contribute to the development of prostate cancer.

Interestingly, the lycopene found in processed tomato-based foods like ketchup and pasta sauce is used better by the body than lycopene found in fresh tomatoes.

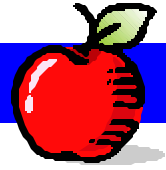
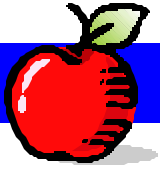
According to Dr. Edward Giovannucci, senior author of a study that recently appeared in the Journal of the National Cancer Institute, spaghetti sauce seems to give the most protection. He said that cooking raw tomatoes as is done to make spaghetti sauce, may free the lycopene in the tomato and allow the body to take in more of the lycopene when you eat.

An article in the August issue of Cancer, Epidemiology, Biomarkers and Prevention says that 30 milligrams (mg) of lycopene each day may decrease the risk of prostate cancer and may also help in fighting the disease. So you may be able to get your daily dose of lycopene just by having one cup of tomato juice and half a grapefruit.

Lycopene Content of Common Foods

FOOD	AMOUNT OF LYCOPENE
One cup of tomato juice	25 mg
½ cup of spaghetti sauce	28 mg
2 Tablespoons tomato paste	14 mg
2 Tablespoons chili sauce	7 mg
2 Tablespoons tomato ketchup	5 mg
A slice of watermelon	15 mg

Check the table above for some foods and their lycopene amounts. The American Cancer Society recommends eating a least five servings of fruits and vegetables each day, so remember to include tomato products.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

This month IMPACT Dietitian Heidi Frith-Smith answers some of your most frequently asked questions:

I am currently undergoing treatment for prostate cancer. Can I continue to drink coffee ?

I recommend avoiding coffee after a radical prostatectomy as the acidity of the coffee may bother the bladder and cause problems with the catheter. In this case, avoid coffee until after the catheter is removed. During radiation therapy, your bladder may become sensitive. Avoid coffee until you complete your treatment. Researchers agree that coffee is not harmful to your health, but when you drink coffee, do so in moderation. I suggest drinking no more than 1-2 cups a day. If you are concerned with caffeine then drink decaffeinated coffee.

Is it alright to eat hot chiles?

Yes! Chiles are full of nutrients like Vitamin C, Vitamin A, potassium, magnesium, iron and B Vitamins. Some popular chiles are Anaheim, Pasilla, Jalapeno, Ajillo, Piquin, De Arbol, Habanero and Serrano. Chiles also contain fiber, an important nutrient for bowel regulation and health. So, you should know that chiles are good for you! Continue to cook with them and eat them as you prefer knowing that they can give you important vitamins and minerals for your body.

Thank you for your questions. I look forward to answering more questions in the future so keep them coming !

*Heidi Frith-Smith, MPH, RD is the IMPACT dietitian.
If you need to speak to her, contact your nurse case manager.*