The Antioxidant Lycopene Is Effective Against Colon Cancer

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(NaturalNews) Colorectal cancer is a devastating kind of disease that invades the large intestines of approximately 153,000 people each year. To remedy this cancer, most people undergo painful surgeries and dangerous chemotherapy/radiation regimens to keep the cancer at bay. It is another type of cancer that presents no signs and symptoms early on, and can grow undetected long before a problem is noticed. And when symptoms do occur -- diarrhea, vomiting, weakness, unexplained weight loss, blood in the stool -- they are not much different from symptoms of other cancers and illnesses: these symptoms are very vague and indicative of a vast number of other illnesses as well.

People who are above age 50; diabetic and insulin resistant; smokers; and those who do not eat fruits and vegetables are at a high risk of developing this particular form of cancer. If people are consuming a poor diet, one rife with processed, nutrient-depleted food, preventing this form and other forms of cancer can be quite difficult. Cancer prevention in and of itself is a tricky science, and little is known -- at least through conventional means -- how to effectively preempt this cancer's onset.

Though still foggy, a light has been able to penetrate the deep recesses of our clouded understanding about cancer prevention, as if a healthful diet were a lighthouse shining in dusk, guiding the vessel of our comprehension. Finally, emerging research has offered up another weapon in the battle against life-threatening cancer, another tool which can be used to assist in the prevention of this and other types of cancer: the antioxidant lycopene. Many have died on the road to finding effective cancer prevention techniques; but through the antioxidant lycopene, the way is becoming that much more easily trodden.

There are steps to take to prevent colorectal cancer. Exercise, which helps to ease the passage of waste material through the large intestine (colon); eating vegetables, fruits and whole grains dense in fiber and avoiding starchy foods; consuming healthy levels of natural fats and animal products; these are all good and necessary steps to take in cancer prevention. Adding lycopene-rich foods is another potent option to assist in impeding cancer growth, however, and an option that needs to be more exercised.

This highly publicized nutrient is more famous for its actions against prostate cancer; however, its effects have been documented in other cancers, including colon cancer. In a recent study conducted by the China Medical University Department of Nutrition, the cancer-combating antioxidant lycopene has been shown to inhibit the proliferation of colorectal cancer cells. It accomplishes this by suppressing an important signaling pathway that enables cancer cells to grow and survive. Curtailing the actions of this particular pathway has been suggested as a potential way to begin treating and preventing other cancers as well, and the actions of this antioxidant have opened a new area of cancer research that could facilitate cancer prevention in the future.

Lycopene is a red pigment (a carotenoid) found in tomatoes and other such red colored produce. Many people are aware that lycopene is abundantly found in tomatoes, but it is also found abundantly in watermelon, guava, and pink grape fruit: basically any fruit or vegetable that has a reddish/pinkish hue to it. Lycopene is a precursor to vitamin A in the body and has far reaching capabilities in cancer prevention and preventing degenerative diseases such as heart disease. As an example, one study conducted by the
University of Illinois looked at lycopene levels in women, and those who had the highest amounts of lycopene were less likely to suffer from cervical cancer than those with the lower amounts - a far less dangerous alternative to injecting the cervical cancer vaccine, Gardasil. Overall, this antioxidant has very promising properties that can lend a hand, not just in colorectal cancer, but also in a number of other diseases and disorders.

Such research as the above serves a great purpose in revealing the power of a good diet, rich in vegetables and fruits, over our health, furthering our knowledge of preventative medicine through nutrition.

Sources:

1. (http://www.3dchem.com/molecules.asp...)
2. (http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/co...)

About the author

Ella Andersen is a college student who intensely researches topics on health and nutrition. In college, she is furthering her love of nutrition by pursuing a degree in clinical dietetics. This passion for natural health, nutrition and wellness has driven her to run her own blog: http://www.snhbw.blogspot.com