



## PROSTATE CANCER PREVENTION

Prostate cancer is the most common cancer in men and the second leading cause of death after lung cancer in men who smoke. Asian men who consume large amounts of soy have been found to have a lower rate of prostate cancer. The strategies that should be looked at in helping to reduce the rate of prostate cancer in men would include looking at diet and lifestyle factors. One of the findings has been that good levels of vitamin D from the sun help to reduce prostate cancer. Dietary interventions include minimising red meat, high fat foods including animal fat and dairy, and sweets. Men should eat more vegetables and soy products. They should eat more cruciferous vegetables (broccoli, cabbage, brussel sprouts, cauliflower and kale). They should eat a lot more legumes which include chickpeas, beans and lentils. Lycopene is found in tomato products and strawberries. The most concentrated form of lycopene is found in tomato paste and this enables a strong antioxidant effect on the prostate to protect it. In addition, calorie restriction has been found to reduce messengers in the prostate that encourage growth of tumour cells, blood vessel growth to enable the tumour to spread, and also helps any tumour cells to die.

The general message is to eat less, mainly plants. A growing percentage of men are developing the “pot tummy” as they age. This can be associated with insulin resistance which causes increased inflammation in the body, along with an increased tendency to diabetes, abnormal cholesterol, heart attack, stroke and prostate cancer amongst other diseases. Avoiding excessive weight gain with the diet mentioned above and adequate exercise will help.

Additional supplementation like fish oil can be useful because it reduces inflammation which can contribute to cancer growth. In addition, studies have found that low doses of aspirin reduce prostate cancer by 21%, although they have found no difference in the aggressiveness of any cancers that might occur. Some studies have shown conflicting evidence in relation to anti inflammatory drugs and prostate cancer risk, so aspirin is the way to go. Aspirin reduces cell division; spread of cancer cells and helps the cancer tissue to die.

A very important point is that if a man has female relatives with the breast cancer BRCA2 mutation, this is associated with an increased risk of prostate cancer by 23 times in younger men – so look out if you have a family history of breast cancer with this gene.

Lastly, there is a selenium deficiency in New Zealand soil and so taking a multivitamin with plenty of selenium in it or perhaps four brazil nuts a day would be a good strategy to increase selenium levels in the body to reduce prostate cancer.

Prostate cancer screening is controversial and depends on who you ask. The blood test called prostate specific antigen, will only indicate that something is wrong in the prostate and does not specifically indicate cancer. This is an issue to discuss with your family doctor. Similarly, it is controversial whether a man should have a digital rectal examination. In those quarters where it is encouraged, it is thought that you should start at about 40 years of age and add to that a two yearly blood test. However, the bottom line would be that prostate cancer screening should be an individual affair for each individual man, according to his own risk profile and that of his family history.

Recent studies have confirmed that testosterone replacement therapy in healthy men has not caused an increased risk of prostate cancer.

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