

[IMAGE]

Preventing Colon Cancer with Plant Foods

The American Cancer Society estimates that nearly 170,000 cancer deaths could be prevented each year in the United States, primarily by increased attention to early warning signs and risk factors. Colon cancer, one of the most common forms of the disease, is thought to be influenced by dietary considerations, a premise investigated in a recent study published by the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*.

Researchers evaluated the potential influence of carotenoids (pigments found primarily in plant foods) in 1,993 patients with colon cancer and 2,410 healthy subjects. Intake of various carotenoids (alpha-carotene, beta-carotene, lycopene, lutein, zeaxanthin, and beta-cryptoxanthin) was examined in relation to age at diagnosis and colon tumor site.

A detailed dietary questionnaire provided data on diet history, and nutrient values for dietary carotenoids were determined using the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture-Nutrition Coordinating Center carotenoid database (1998). Results showed that subjects with high lutein intake had a reduced risk of colon cancer; no significant associations were noted between colon cancer and any of the other carotenoids studied.

Major dietary sources of lutein include spinach, broccoli, lettuce, and other green-leaf vegetables. Tomatoes, oranges, carrots and celery also provide moderate amounts of this cancer-fighting carotenoid. For more information on the power of nutrition to maintain health and wellness, schedule a consultation with your doctor of chiropractic.

Reference:

Slattery ML, Benson J, Curtin K, et al. Carotenoids and colon cancer. *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* 2000; Vol. 71, pp575-82.

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