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Tomato and broccoli recipe to fight cancer

LONDON: Eating tomatoes and broccoli in the same meal could help men fight prostate cancer.

A study suggests that when they are both present in a regular diet, the two foods — known for their cancer-fighting qualities — help reduce tumours more effectively than when they are eaten separately.

Researchers from the University of Illinois believe that different compounds in the vegetables can work together to attack cancer cells along different biological pathways.

They suggest men should regularly consume servings of up to three quarters of a head of raw broccoli and two to three tomatoes to help fight the disease.

The university's food science and human nutrition professor, John Erdman, said men should consider consuming three to five such servings a week.

"Studies have shown that men who regularly eat servings of fresh tomatoes have up to a 40 per cent reduced risk of developing prostate cancer, while the sulphur compounds in broccoli are known to be a mechanism that delays cancer growth," he said.

"They are quite different agents and do not have to be eaten together, but their effects seem to be very complementary."

In a study published in the US journal *Cancer Research*, the scientists fed a diet containing 10 per cent tomato powder and 10 per cent broccoli powder to rats implanted with prostate cancer cells.

Other rats received either tomato or broccoli powder alone; or lycopene, the red pigment in tomatoes thought to be an effective cancer-preventive agent; or finasteride, a drug prescribed for men with enlarged prostates.

Another group was castrated. After 22 weeks, the rats given tomato and broccoli in combination were found to have smaller tumours.

Professor Erdman said: "When eaten together, we see an additive effect. Cooked tomatoes may be better than raw tomatoes.

"The lesson is to eat a variety of fruits and vegetables prepared in a variety of ways."

Kirstie Canene-Adams, who carried out the study, said: "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."

Julie Sharp, of Cancer Research UK, said effects on humans were still unclear.

"We do know that a balanced diet can help reduce the risk of cancer and should include plenty of fresh vegetables and fruit," she said.

The Times

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