

Health Insights Today

A SERVICE OF CLEVELAND CHIROPRACTIC COLLEGE

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Nutrition Update

When reading reports on new research, it is important to remember that no single study should be seen as providing the whole truth. The following reports offer helpful clues but in most cases further research is needed before firm conclusions can be drawn.

Folate Supplements May Increase Prostate Cancer Risk

Insufficient folate (folic acid) intake by pregnant women has been shown to produce serious birth defects. As a result, all pregnant women are advised to take folic acid supplements as part of normal pre-natal health care. Supplement manufacturers now include at least 400 mcg/day of folate in virtually all multivitamin formulas and food companies now fortify many foods (cereals, etc.) with folate. But in this case, what is good for women and children may not be good for men. New research at the University of Southern California indicates that taking too much folate (1000 mcg/day) is linked to a doubling of prostate cancer rates. Conversely, increased folate intake from food sources (vegetables, beans, fruits and whole grains) is associated with decreased rates of prostate cancer.

Figueiredo JC, Grau MV, Haile RW, et al. Folic Acid and Risk of Prostate Cancer: Results From a Randomized Clinical Trial. *J. Natl. Cancer Inst.* March 18, 2009 2009;101(6):432-435.

Soy May Protect Against Prostate Cancer

A study that followed over 14,000 men for 12 years found that higher dietary intake of isoflavones from soy products is associated with decreased rates of prostate cancer. Higher plasma levels of the isoflavone genistein were associated with lower risk of prostate cancer. Although plasma daidzein showed no association, the highest third of men for plasma equol, a metabolite of daidzein, was also significantly associated with a decreased risk of prostate cancer.

Kurahashi N, Iwasaki M, Inoue M, Sasazuki S, Tsugane S. Plasma isoflavones and subsequent risk of prostate cancer in a nested case-control study: the Japan Public Health Center. *J Clin Oncol.* Dec 20 2008;26(36):5923-5929.

Cured and Smoked Meat and Fish May Raise Leukemia Rates, While Vegetables and Tofu Decrease Risk

Cured and smoked meat and fish is the primary dietary source of carcinogenic nitrates and nitrosamines. A study in Taiwan, published in *BMC Cancer*, shows increased rates of childhood leukemia, the most common form of childhood cancer, in those who eat these foods one or more times per week. Increased consumption of vegetables and bean-curd (tofu) is associated with reduced risk of leukemia, while pickled vegetables, fruit and tea were not statistically linked to either increased or decreased leukemia rates.

Liu C, Hsu Y, Wu M, et al. Cured meat, vegetables, and bean-curd foods in relation to childhood acute leukemia risk: A population based case-control study. *BMC Cancer* 2009;9:15. doi:10.1186/1471-2407-9-15.

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Probiotics May Protect Against Infections in Children

Probiotics are beneficial bacteria found in a variety of food sources including yogurt and other fermented milk products as well as miso, kimchi, pickles, sauerkraut, tempeh and soy sauce (tamari and shoyu). Researchers at a Taiwan hospital conducted a large study (1062 children) and found that various combinations of probiotics helped to decrease rates of respiratory and digestive tract infections.

Lin JS, Chiu YH, Lin NT, et al. Different effects of probiotic species/strains on infections in preschool children: A double-blind, randomized, controlled study. *Vaccine*. Feb 11 2009;27(7):1073-1079.