

## **7 Foods That Fight Cancer**

*7 Foods That Fight Cancer // Curry dish (© Lisa Romerein/FoodPix/Jupiterimages)*

For now at least, there's no one to keep us from eating to beat disease, even if that disease is a multi-headed monster like cancer. But unlike prescription cancer drugs, most of which are designed to treat the illness, pharmaceutical foods are here to help prevent it.

We've rounded up the newest of these nutritional standouts, along with strategies for slipping them into your diet. And while none of the lucky seven that follow are FDA-approved, your body will be Men's Health-improved after you eat them.

### **Curry up**

The right spice can make the meal—and block the tumor. That's what University of Illinois researchers discovered when they pitted turmeric against 19 different strains of *H. pylori*, the ulcer-inducing bacterium that's been linked to colon and gastric cancers. In every case, turmeric took the teeth out of *H. pylori*.

"Turmeric didn't necessarily reduce the bacterial load," says Gail Mahady, Ph.D., the study's lead author. "What it did was reduce the chronic inflammation caused by *H. pylori*. And it's this inflammation that has been associated with the development of cancer."

The best way to increase your intake of turmeric? Eat Indian food. Specifically, try dining on curry, which is rich in turmeric and often contains additional cancer squashers, such as garlic and onions. Another option: Slather extra mustard on all your sandwiches; the bright yellow variety is loaded with turmeric.

By David Freeman

### **Gill or be killed**

Shark cartilage won't ward off cancer, but a shark's diet might. A recently completed 12-year Harvard study of nearly 48,000 men determined that those who ate fish more than three times a week were 40 percent less likely to develop advanced prostate cancer than those who hit the surf only twice a month.

It's those amazing omega-3s again, though they don't deserve all the credit. "Fish also contains vitamin A and vitamin D, which may help prevent prostate cancer," says Michael F. Leitzmann, M.D., a coauthor of the study.

That's why it may be better to skip supplements and stick with actual fish. Salmon, mackerel, and herring have the best balance of omega-3s, vitamin A, and vitamin D.

Note: Don't wait until the weekend to go fishing, says Dr. Leitzmann. "Space your fish consumption out over the week so you consume a steady supply of these compounds."

### **Add zest to life**

Fresh-squeezed OJ contains all the health benefits of oranges except one: the cancer protection in the peel. People who regularly consume citrus zest reduce their risk of squamous-cell skin cancer by 30 percent, according to a recent University of Arizona study. Even lab rats live longer on the stuff; animal studies suggest that citrus zest can actually shrink existing tumors.

Turns out the oils in the peels of oranges, lemons, and grapefruit contain powerful compounds that stimulate the body's production of a detoxifying enzyme, explains study author Iman Hakim, M.D., Ph.D., who says the results had an impact on her research group. "Several people around here started chewing on citrus peels," she says.

Another option: Grate the colored portion of the peel and add the pile of zest (at least a tablespoonful) to soups, salads, and salsa, or sprinkle it on chicken and fish.

### **Get white hot**

Green tea grabs all the headlines as a tumor-taming brew, but the white kind surpasses it at preventing colon cancer. When researchers at Oregon State University's Linus Pauling Institute tested the two teas' abilities to block colon-polyp growth, the white tea beverage was about 10 percent more effective. In fact, it stopped polyps as effectively as sulindac, a powerful anti-inflammatory drug.

And while prescription anti-inflammatories can cause internal bleeding and ulcers, "tea is pretty much guaranteed not to cause side effects," says Gayle Orner, Ph.D., the study's lead author. The study used Exotica white tea (80 tea bags for \$20 at stashtea.com); 3 cups a day may be enough to cut your cancer risk.

### **Find your whey**

Not since lycopene landed in our lives has there been a more promising prostate-cancer-fighting nutrient than whey protein. In a recent Ohio State University study, researchers treated human prostate cells with whey protein and then measured the cells' levels of a natural cancer-blocking compound called glutathione.

The finding: Glutathione levels rose by a remarkable 64 percent. "Whey is a great source of the amino acid cysteine, and cysteine can become glutathione in the body," explains Rosemary L. Walzem, R.D., Ph.D., director of the Center for Nutrition, Health, and Food Genomics at Texas A&M University.

One of the best sources of whey is yogurt; a lot of the protein is in the clear liquid on top, so don't pour it off. You can also pick up powdered whey-protein isolate—vanilla-flavored—and add it to instant oatmeal.

### **Berry yourself alive**

Make every day Thanksgiving and you could slash your risk of several different cancers. Researchers at the University of California, Los Angeles have confirmed that cranberries contain a trove of tumor-blocking compounds, including phenolic acids, glycosides, and anthocyanins.

These phytochemicals are effective at preventing cancer down below—in the colon and prostate—as well as up top—on the head and neck. "They force cancer cells to die or they inhibit their unregulated growth," says David Heber, M.D., Ph.D., a coauthor of the study.

To hit your daily cran quota, down a small glass of cranberry juice (the type that lists at least 27 percent juice on the label) at breakfast and snack on Craisins (sweetened dried cranberries) throughout the day.

### **Pledge to the gamma frat**

The nutrient with the coolest name—gamma tocopherol—may also be the one with the fastest draw in a showdown with cancer. When Purdue University researchers pitted this form of vitamin E against prostate- and lung-cancer cells, they discovered that it was able to stop the cells in their microscopic tracks.

What's more, gamma tocopherol helped kill existing tumor cells without hurting healthy cells, says Qing Jiang, Ph.D., the study's lead author.

But what about the research showing that vitamin E supplements are worthless, and perhaps even dangerous? Doesn't apply to gamma tocopherol, since it isn't included in most E supplements.

Instead, you'll find it in sesame oil, which you can sub for other cooking oils or sprinkle over salads. Or, if you want a source you can sink your teeth into, munch on walnuts.