

Cancer Alert: Your Best Defense - Go Cruciferous

We may not have eaten so healthfully our entire lives. We may have a family history of breast, prostate or colon cancer. What should we do? Just wait until cancer is found?

Getting medical screenings is certainly a personal decision, but if you want to know what you can really do to protect yourself - eat lots of colorful vegetables, specifically including lots of green cruciferous vegetables. Eating a diet rich in cruciferous vegetables is your best defense for fighting and preventing cancer.

If we really want to win the war against cancer, we must improve the nutritional quality of our diet. We have all heard about the antioxidant effects our bodies derive from the phytochemicals in plant foods. However, the unique phytochemicals found in cruciferous vegetables offer superior benefits. Cruciferous vegetables contain phytochemicals that have unique abilities to modify human hormones, detoxify compounds, and prevent toxic compounds from binding to human DNA, preventing toxins from causing DNA damage that could lead to cancer. Studies have even shown that genetic defects that may lead to cancer are suppressed by the consumption of green cruciferous vegetables.

Certainly, many studies have shown that eating fresh fruits, beans, vegetables, seeds, and nuts reduces the occurrence of cancer. I plotted cancer incidence in 25 countries against unrefined plant food intake and found that as vegetables, beans, and fruit consumption goes up 20% in a population, cancer rates typically drop 20%. But cruciferous vegetables are different; they have been shown to be twice as effective. As cruciferous vegetable intake goes up 20%, in a population, cancer rates drop 40%.

arugula
bok choy
broccoli
broccoli rabe
brocollina
brussels sprouts
cabbage
cauliflower
collards
horseradish
kale
kohlrabi
mustard greens
radish
red cabbage
rutabaga
turnips
turnip greens
watercress

Include them in both raw and cooked forms and eat a variety of them. These benefits cannot be duplicated by taking any one pre-formed compound or supplement.

The evidence is now overwhelming that cruciferous vegetables play a major and unique role in the widely recognized protective effects of natural plant foods against cancer--and are the most important players in this arena. The biologically active compounds from raw and conservatively cooked green vegetables enhance the natural defenses of the human body against DNA damage and they even fuel the body's ability to block growth and replication of cells that are already damaged. For those in the know, these foods are the most important nutritional factors to prevent common human cancers.

Read more about Cruciferous Vegetables - what they are and how they benefit us along with the studies that support these claims - in Dr. Fuhrman's July 2007 Healthy Times Newsletter plus get great-tasting cruciferous-rich recipes!

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