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**The Diet / Cancer Link**

**By Simon Mitchell**

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Attitudes to the link between diet and cancer are changing fast. The World Cancer Research Fund was founded specifically to fund and sponsor education and research into the diet-cancer link. There is mounting evidence that the high fat intake in a typical Western diet, along with the low intake of nutritious foods such as vegetables, fruits and wholegrains, may be responsible for up to 35% of cancers.

The World Cancer Research Fund is the only major national charity concerned with the link between cancer and food, nutrition and lifestyle factors. Their report Food, Nutrition and the Prevention of Cancer: a global perspective gives guidelines consistent with those published by the World Health Organisation, the E.U. Europe against Cancer initiative and other authoritative organisations. The idea of an anti-cancer diet promotes prevention by strengthening the immune system directly and has partly led to the promotion of a five a day campaign for fresh fruit and vegetables.

The intensification of agricultural practices has led to a decline of between 25% to 75% in the levels of key mineral nutrients in farmed vegetables over the last 60 years. There has also been a rise in farmed fruit sugar levels, so much so that some natural fruit juices now contain as much sugar as a fizzy drink.

If we can source quality food, our cooking methods often destroy the nutritional content. Studies show that fresh, uncooked vegetables strengthen the immune system and increase resistance to many diseases. Cabbage placed in cold water and boiled loses about 75% of its vitamin C content. Similarly fresh peas cooked for only five minutes lose 20-40% of their Thiamine content and 30-40% of their vitamin C. About 50% of vitamin E is destroyed by frying or baking food.

Tests in Spain recently measured the levels of flavonoids (a kind of antioxidant) left in fresh broccoli after it was cooked. The results show large differences in flavonoid content according to how the broccoli was prepared. The cooking methods were: boiling - 66% loss pressure-cooking - 53% loss of

major antioxidant steaming – minimal loss of antioxidants microwaving – 97% loss of flavonoids

Scientists in Finland found that blanching and deep-freezing vegetables destroyed beneficial compounds. Blanching prior to freezing destroyed up to one-third of the vitamin C content of vegetables and more was lost in storage. The healing properties of uncooked foods are being increasingly recognised in natural cancer therapies.

The more we let food industries create what we eat the more likely we are to be at risk from diet related problems. In effect the commercial interests of food manufacturers are systematically robbing unwary shoppers of health, and eventually life. The more control and information we have in sourcing pure foodstuffs, the less at risk we are from dis-ease for nutritional reasons. One of the first steps in finding a healthy diet is changing how and where we shop and sourcing foods we can trust. The supermarkets give us thousands of choices but few options. Try to find for example, one of the many varieties of biscuits available that do not contain hydrogenated vegetable oil.

Too much protein in a diet is also harmful to health and can promote cancer. Meat and sugar-rich diets are common in the West. These are often overcooked or over processed. When cooked or processed foods are eaten our white blood cells (leukocytes) rush to the intestine to help with digestion. As a result other parts of the body may be left undefended from attack by germs and viruses after a heavily synthetic meal.

Biological enhancement of crops, growth hormones in milk and meat, mercury in our mouths, colorants and carcinogens in food are commonplace. The foot and mouth epidemic, B.S.E. in sheep and cattle, nuclear radiation and the de-naturalisation of our food are examples of how common sense is abandoned to profit. The Precautionary Principle is too often being overlooked in the rush of science.

The genetic modification of foodstuffs for example is still largely untested and many of its results are open to interpretation. Scientific knowledge of the processes involved is actually at an early stage. Little is known about side effects, how gene function is controlled, gene transfer into other organisms such as bacteria in the human gut. The British Medical Association (B.M.A.) has said that the potential adverse effects have not been sufficiently investigated and strongly recommend caution. The United Nations safety body, the Food and Agriculture Organisation, has warned that the failure to carry out full health checks on G.M. foods could lead to toxic reactions, allergies and increased resistance to antibiotics.

Experience has shown that genetically modified and organic foods cannot exist together because genetically modified crops will cross-pollinate with any others. Contamination of the whole food chain has already occurred within a couple of years. Biotechnology companies that are facing opposition in Europe are targeting less well resourced countries such as India in the hope that genetically modified organisms will spread irreversibly before public opinion has time to intervene.

In addition to avoiding the carcinogens that are increasing everywhere in our culture, we need a complex yet balanced mixture of specific minerals and nutrients to maintain ourselves in a healthy way. Recent government policy recommends we should eat a minimum of five or six fruit and vegetable types in any given day. The British Dietetic Associations survey shows that the typical English diet

includes only 3.3 portions of fruit and vegetables a day. The Scottish consume 2.7 portions a day while the Irish get only a measly 2.3. New research from Spain suggests that the quality of food and its method of preparation are as important as the quantity, since many of the nutrients in food are destroyed during industrial preparation and even in domestic cooking processes. In order to gain the breadth of specific minerals we need to maintain health using food, we need fresh, quality food types, cooked appropriately, or at least someone to sell us the right supplements!

The quick-fix mentality of Western culture has grown so used to pill-popping supplements that markets have responded to this. The American public uses increasing amounts of vitamin and mineral supplements. A survey conducted by the Federal Drugs Authority (F.D.A.) in America states that over 60 million Americans believe that vitamin supplements are essential for good health. The report also shows that about 20 million Americans believe that mineral deficiency is a primary cause of disease, including cancer, which shows what a good marketing job the supplements industry has done. Drug corporations are moving quickly into the supplements industry following market forces. Legislation in Europe is posed to ban many supplements (like herbs) that have a natural source, in preference to pharmaceutical alternatives. Even though appropriate dietary supplements are becoming recognised as a useful tool in maintaining health, legislation is fast catching up to regulate this field, showing a clear preference to synthetic chemicals.

In 1980 the National Academy of Sciences Committee on Dietary Allowances (who established R.D.A.s or Recommended Daily Allowances) found no scientific evidence for nutritional benefits from vitamins, minerals or trace elements in dosages greater than those supplied by a balanced diet. Supplement industries with generous advertising budgets persuade many people that it is better to have expensive urine than be at risk to disease through lacking the right vitamin or mineral in a diet.

Simon Mitchell

This is an extract from 'Don't Get Cancer'a new ebook available only at:

<http://www.simonthescribe.co.uk/don'tget1.html>

### **Preventing Prostate Cancer**

#### **By News Canada**

(NC)—It is increasingly recognized that diet plays a role in prostate cancer, a disease that affects one in eight men. For optimal health, it's important to exercise regularly and eat according to Canada's Food Guide, which recommends lots of fruits and vegetables, many of which contain the antioxidant selenium.

"Antioxidants help neutralize the influence of free-radical oxygen molecules which can cause cell damage that can lead to prostate cancer," said John Blanchard, President of the Prostate Cancer Research Foundation of Canada. "Our bodies need a diet rich in vitamins and minerals to help prevent the disease."

Recent studies suggest that selenium and vitamin E may reduce a man's risk of developing prostate

cancer. One study showed that the incidence of prostate cancer was markedly lower in those who supplemented their diets with selenium, while another found that the occurrence of prostate cancer and the risk of death from prostate cancer was significantly less in those who supplemented their diet with vitamin E.

Because of these positive findings, a large study called the Selenium and Vitamin E Cancer Prevention Trial (SELECT) was recently launched to specifically determine whether selenium and vitamin E, individually and together, can help prevent prostate cancer.

Foods that contain selenium include seafood, meat, grains, and certain types of nuts. It is very difficult to get the recommended amount of vitamin E through diet alone, however it can be found in vegetable oil, nuts, whole grains and wheat germ. As it's not always easy to eat well, consider taking a daily multivitamin such as Centrum® to ensure an adequate intake of selenium and vitamin E on a regular basis.

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