Lycopene and Vitamin E Together Protect Against Prostate Cancer

By Greg Arnold, DC, CSCS, April 27, 2006, abstracted from “Combined Lycopene and Vitamin E Treatment Suppresses the Growth of PC-346C Human Prostate Cancer Cells in Nude Mice” in the May 2006 issue of the Journal of Nutrition

As the number one cancer killer of American men, there are an estimated 234,460 new cases of prostate cancer each year that will result in an estimated 27,350 deaths in 2006. With a 100% five-year survival rate if found early, but only a 34% survival rate if the cancer has spread, a premium is placed on prevention.

But this emphasis on prevention through regular prostate screening tests is not completely effective, since the American Cancer Society admits there are “potential problems" with current screening tests because they are not 100% accurate.

Research has found a number of ways to help protect against prostate cancer that include consuming spinach, broccoli, red wine, green tea, and soy while avoiding processed foods.

Now a new study has found that the combination of two well-known antioxidants, vitamin E and lycopene, may prove effective against prostate cancer.

Previous research has shown that both lycopene and vitamin E help protect against prostate cancer. Building on these findings, researchers examined both tumor growth and a prostate screening test called PSA in mice after administering either lycopene (50 mg per kg of bodyweight), vitamin E in the form of alpha-tocopheryl acetate (50 mg per kg of bodyweight), both vitamin E and lycopene or placebo. Three days before administering the antioxidants, research injected the mice with a prostate cancer-causing chemical.

Although researchers did not find that lycopene and vitamin E alone significantly reduced tumor volume, the combined treatment suppressed prostate tumor growth by 73% by day 42 and increased median survival time by 40% from 47 to 66 days. PSA levels did not differ between the groups, adding evidence to the inconsistency of current prostate screening tests.

For the researchers, “Our data provide evidence that lycopene combined with vitamin E may inhibit the growth of prostate cancer and that PSA can serve as a biomarker of tumor response for this treatment regimen.”

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Reference:
1 “What Are The Key Statistics For Prostate Cancer?” posted on the American Cancer Society Website
www.cancer.org/docroot/CRI/content/CRI_2_4_1X_What_are_the_key_statistics_for_prostate_cancer_36.asp?sitearea=

2 “Can Prostate Cancer Be Found Early?” posted on the American Cancer Society Website
www.cancer.org/docroot/CRI/content/CRI_2_4_3X_Can_prostate_cancer_be_found_early_36.asp?nav=cri

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“Prostate Specific Antigen” posed on the National Cancer Institute Website www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/factsheet/Detection/PSA