



Two a day can slow down the disease, scientists say

The tomato pills that fight prostate cancer

AN OVER-THE-COUNTER pill containing the substance that makes tomatoes red is an effective new weapon against prostate cancer, scientists have found.

It can not only protect men from the disease but can also slow its progress in sufferers, according to a study.

Several studies have previously suggested that eating tomato products rich in lycopene may protect against the onset of prostate cancer. Now researchers have discovered that

By **James Chapman**
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Lyc-O-Mato, a natural supplement containing 15mg of tomato lycopene, equivalent to six tomatoes, is a good way to enhance that protective effect.

The tomato pills were tested on 30 men with localised prostate cancer who were due to have their prostates removed.

For three weeks before their operations, half of the men took the extract - which is available from chemists' and health shops - twice

daily. After surgery, the scientists found that the treated group had smaller tumours than the others, and they were less likely to have spread.

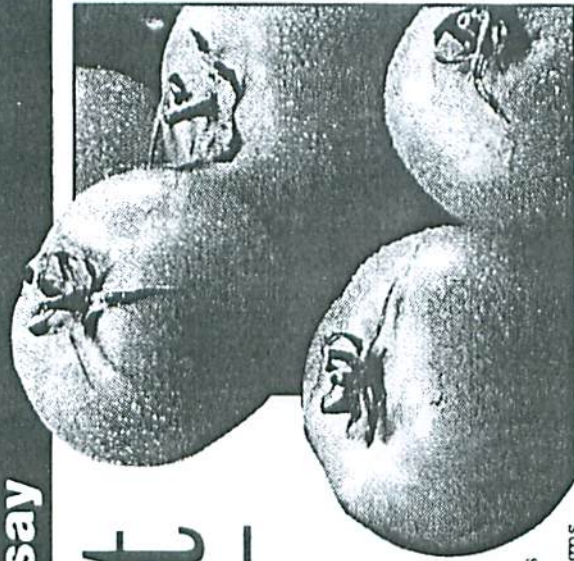
Their tumours also showed signs of having shrunk and become less malignant. It was the first time such an effect had been shown with a supplement, said Professor Omer Kucuk, an expert at the Karmanos Cancer Institute in Detroit.

'Our findings suggest that lycopene as tomato extract may not only help prevent prostate cancer, but also may be useful in treating prostate cancer,' he said in the latest issue of the journal Cancer Epidemiology Biomarkers and Prevention.

Although lycopene is found in tomatoes and some other fruits such as melons, the average British adult consumes far less than the amount previous studies have found is needed to provide protection.

A separate study suggests that greater exposure to the sun may also give some protection against both the development and severity of prostate cancer.

Researchers at the North Staffordshire Hospital, Stoke-on-Trent, and Keele University discovered that



A pill is equivalent to six tomatoes patients at the hospital's urology clinic who had spent more time in the sun appeared to be protected against the disease.

However, the scientists, whose work is published in this week's Lancet medical journal, stressed their research was at an early stage and pointed out that there were well-established dangers associated with over-exposure to the sun, including skin cancer.

In the UK, 20,000 men are diagnosed with prostate cancer each year, and the disease kills 9,500 men.

It tends to strike the over-50s but can also affect younger men with a family history of the disease.

Last year, the Daily Mail's Dying of Embarrassment campaign raised awareness of the disease and readers donated £1million to fund research.

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