Red Wine Protects Prostate Health

Men who regularly drink red wine have a reduced risk of prostate cancer, according to a study recently published in the International Journal of Cancer.*

Moderate consumption of red wine has previously been reported to reduce risk for cardiovascular disease.

Researchers at the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center in Seattle investigated the association between consumption of various alcoholic beverages and the incidence of prostate cancer in middle-aged men. The researchers used data from a population-based, case-controlled study in King County, WA. A group of 753 newly diagnosed prostate cancer patients, ranging from 40 to 64 years of age, were matched by age to a control group of 703 men. All the participants completed a personal interview on lifetime alcohol consumption and other risk factors for prostate cancer.

Red wine consumption was associated with a decreased risk for prostate cancer, the researchers reported. Men who drank four glasses of red wine weekly demonstrated a 50% reduction in prostate cancer risk. Red wine appeared to be especially beneficial in offering protection against more aggressive cancers of the prostate. Consumption of white wine, beer, or liquor did not affect prostate cancer risk, according to the study.

Alcohol consumption is a modifiable lifestyle risk factor that may affect cancer risk. Alcohol alters hormonal factors and contains chemical substances such as flavonoids that may alter tumor growth. The researchers noted that resveratrol, an antioxidant that naturally occurs in the skin of red grapes, may be responsible for red wine’s protective effects on the prostate gland. Resveratrol may help modulate prostate cancer risk by reducing inflammation and neutralizing dangerous free radicals.

—Elizabeth Wagner, ND

Reference

Soy Protein Reduces Atherosclerosis Risk

Canadian scientists have reported that soy protein promotes a pattern of low-density lipoprotein (LDL) particles that is less likely to cause lipid deposits in the arteries, thus favorably altering one of the most dangerous risk factors for cardiovascular disease.*

Until recently, LDL was thought of as a single compound that increased risk for coronary artery disease. Recent findings have shown, however, that LDL exists as either small or large particles. The smaller, denser LDL particles are dangerous promoters of cardiovascular disease, while the larger, more buoyant LDL particles are protective.

In their study reported in the Journal of Nutrition, the Canadian researchers examined men and women with high blood cholesterol levels who consumed four different diets in a random order for six weeks each. One diet included soy protein depleted of isoflavones, another contained soy protein with added isoflavones, and the other two diets contained animal protein either with or without added isoflavones. LDL particles were measured and assessed for size before and after each dietary intervention.

Consumption of soy protein was associated with a larger peak LDL particle size relative to animal protein. Soy protein decreased levels of small LDL particles by 12% and raised levels of large LDL particles by 14% relative to animal protein. Isoflavones did not affect LDL particle characteristics.

By helping to optimize LDL particle size, soy protein may be a valuable therapeutic tool in reducing the risk of cardiovascular disease. The Life Extension Foundation offers the VAP™ laboratory test to assess LDL particle size and other cardiovascular risk factors.

—Elizabeth Wagner, ND

Reference
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