

Study: Eating This Fruit May Decrease Colon Cancer Risk

Specific research findings were recently provided to guests at the Experimental Biology Conference (Boston, 2015). The study results provide evidence of reduced risk of these cancers by the addition of dried plums within the nutritional regime.

This supplementation increases the promotion of good bacteria within the colon. According to research professor Dr. Nancy Turner, this outcome provides individuals with a positive health benefit which strongly produces evidence of the reduced risk of developing this type of cancer.

Main Cause of Deaths

Colon cancer is currently the third cause of cancer deaths among men and women (classified in studies separately) in the United States, as distinguished by the American Cancer Society. When viewing statistics of both populations together, this form of cancer is noted as the second leading producer of deaths. Within the United States in 2015, deaths are expected to be close to 50,000 related to this one cancer alone.

Background Information

Within the colon, a very high concentration of bacteria are present; over four hundred different species of bacteria have been previously identified. Good bacteria, as well as bad, are present within the environment at any given time. It is important for the body to have a sufficient amount of good bacteria within the colon to continuously promote good health. Previous studies have shown if the balance of these bacteria is not healthy, inflammation occurs and can further enhance the development of these cancers.

Research Findings

Microbiota, commonly known as “gut bacteria,” is positively affected by the consuming of dried plums, within the diet on a regular basis. Research studies also show the metabolism of the bacteria within the colon can be altered based on dietary consumption. This metabolic change is needed to help with healthy disease prevention and it can aid in dietary treatments, as noted by Dr. Turner’s research findings.

In order to understand how this positive process works, dried plums hold phenolic compounds which provide various affects towards one’s health. First, this specific food contains antioxidant benefits which gives health to the body. Second, the compounds provide the ability to neutralize free radicals present within the body. Free radicals are known to cause potential damage to the body’s DNA.

During Turner’s research, the hypothesis stated the supplementation of preserved plums in the diet would provide the detainment of microbiota, thereby reducing the risk of cancer developing within the colon. Controlled studies were created with matched macronutrients given to two different groups of rats. Following dietary consumption, the internal colons of each groups were examined.

Positive Results and Strong Findings

The study results provide vigorous health findings which are conclusively positive. The group of rats which were provided a composition of dehydrated plums experienced an increase in Bacteriodetes (rod shaped bacteria) as well as a decrease in Firmicutes. These bacterial levels were contained within the descending colon and sigmoid colon (within pelvic area). On the contrary, the study group of rats which did not consume the dehydrated plums experienced the opposite effects.

Additionally, a secondary observation noted during research studies included the rats who consumed the dried plums had much lower numbers of abnormal tubes within the lining of the

colon (known as aberrant crypt foci, ACF). ACF is typically observed as a strong signal which occurs prior to the development of cancers within the colon; they are seen medically as pre-cancerous lesions.

Turner offered this positive assurance: the increase in Bacteroidetes (along with decrease in Firmicutes) gives strong evidence the addition of dehydrated plums within the diet provides substantial health benefits. Healthy gains include the promotion of more good bacteria within the “gut” which helps in the prevention of cancer of the colon. This is in direct correlation with a reduction in the number of ACF seen.

More Research Needed

Although this research study performed at Texas A&M University (along with assistance of the University in North Carolina) shows extremely promising results, further research in the field of science nutrition is encouraged, especially within human trials. It is noted this one dietary change can provide an excellent and beneficial strategy to work against the development of cancers of the colon.

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