



Comment on Clinical Cancer Research paper (2009)

A new study, about to be published in Clinical Cancer Research, reveals that omega-3 fats are protective against prostate cancer, a disease that affects 34,000 men a year in the UK and is the most common male cancer.

Researchers from the University of California assessed diet in 466 men diagnosed with aggressive prostate cancer and compared this with information from 478 healthy men. Both groups were then categorised according to their intakes of 'long chain' omega-3s, the special fats found in oily fish and certain dietary supplements.

The results showed that men with the highest intakes of omega-3s were 60% less likely to develop aggressive prostate cancer compared with men who had the lowest omega-3 intakes.

The researchers also found that certain men were genetically programmed to be at greater risk of prostate cancer, but that this could be alleviated by consuming an additional 500mg of omega-3s per day. This equates to daily cod liver oil supplement or a couple of portions of oily fish a week.

Dr Carrie Ruxton, nutrition advisor to the Health Supplements Information Service (HSIS) commented: "Intakes of fish and omega-3s in the UK are woefully inadequate. Yet, a growing body of research shows that these fats are essential for health, as proved by this latest study on prostate cancer. I am convinced that increasing levels of omega-3s in the UK, particularly the type found in fish and fish oils, would help many more people achieve optimal health and contribute towards lowering the burden of chronic disease.

"At present, we have an official daily recommendation of 450mg per day of omega-3s, yet average fish intakes are too low to guarantee this. People need to improve their consumption of fish or, where this is not possible for whatever reason, consider the wide range of fish oil supplements or fortified foods that can help them achieve the recommended amount".

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For more information on vitamins and minerals visit www.HSIS.org.uk

The Health Supplements Information Service (HSIS) (www.hsis.org.uk; Tel: 020 7052 8955) is an independent information body, set up to provide balanced information on vitamins and minerals. It is supported by a restricted educational grant from the Proprietary Association of Great Britain (PAGB).