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1345 Kuser Rd, Suite 5 - Hamilton, NJ 08619 - phone: (609) 585-8400 - visit us on the web at: www.cassaraconsulting.com - email: info@cassaraconsulting.com

Prostate Cancer Prevention



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Did you know that, not counting some forms of skin cancer, prostate cancer is the most common cancer in American men? In the United States, one in nine men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer during the course of their life. There is no way to know for sure if you will get prostate cancer, and men have a greater risk of prostate cancer if they are 50 years old or older, are African-American, or have a father, brother or son who has had prostate cancer.

Can You Reduce the Risk?

While it's recommended that men discuss the benefits and risks of prostate cancer screening with their doctors, there's also the question if there's a way to reduce the risk of developing prostate cancer in the first place. Lycopene, vitamin E and selenium are marketed to men as

tools to reduce the chance of developing the disease. But is supplementation beneficial? Can eating specific foods help?

Most experts agree that men should get the recommended amounts of selenium and lycopene from foods rather than supplements. A general, healthful eating pattern contains both selenium and lycopene which are naturally available in a variety of foods. Eating plentiful vegetables, fruits, beans, whole grains, nuts and seeds contributes to overall health, including reducing risk of many types of cancer.

No Magic Bullet

Steer clear of supplements or foods that are touted as "magic bullet" prevention tools. In fact, some research has emerged showing high levels of certain nutrients taken as supplements — including vitamin E — may actually increase risk. However, there are some actions men can take to still get these beneficial nutrients to help them stay healthy.

- Aim to eat 2½ cups of vegetables and 2 cups of fruit per day. Choose dark-colored fruits and vegetables more often. Dark colored produce, such as spinach, berries and orange bell peppers, have higher levels of many carotenoids and other healthful nutrients. Individually, these nutrients may not play a major role in prostate cancer prevention. However, when obtained from foods, these nutrients work with one another to promote health.
- Replace less healthy, saturated and trans fats with their healthy alternatives from plant foods — olive oil, canola oil, avocados and unsalted nuts.
- Be physically active. Research has shown that men who had prostate cancer and engaged in physical activity had a lower risk of dying from the disease. For substantial health benefits, the 2018 Physical Activity Guidelines recommend that adults engage in a minimum of 30 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity at least five times a week.

Reviewed July 2019 by Christopher R. Mohr, PHD, RD. Published September 20, 2019. To learn more healthy tips, visit www.eatright.org and consult a registered dietitian nutritionist. Info obtained from www.eatright.org.