

Heart healthy diet helps prevent prostate cancer

Dear Readers. Please wear a face covering, wash your hands frequently, stay 6 feet apart, eat healthy and be physically active. If you or someone you care for has diabetes join the free monthly Vidant Diabetes support meeting Nov. 16 from 5:30-6:30 p.m. to learn about healthy holiday eating. Ask Susan Houston at susan.houston@vidanthealth.com to send you an invite or call 252-847-1436.

Q Is there anything I can do to reduce my chances of developing prostate cancer?
KPN, Greenville

A We haven't talked about ways to reduce risk for prostate cancer in a while, so thanks for asking. There are ways of eating that can make a difference. Charles Klose, a second-year Brody medical student has important information to share with you.

Prostate cancer is one of the most common types of cancer with about 1 in 9 men diagnosed during their lifetime. Men who have family members with the disease

and African American men are at an even higher risk. The experts say men aged 55 to 69 should be screened by exam and blood tests every two years with those at higher risk starting earlier.

The reason for all this effort is because discovering cancer early greatly increases the chances of curing it with treatment. But even before that, following a healthy lifestyle including eating healthy, being at a healthy weight and being physically active are important strategies for reducing your risk for cancers.

There are many men who are aware of prostate cancer and its risks but are not sure where to begin in taking a proactive approach in prevention. Lifestyle changes through diet and exercise have shown to lower rates of prostate cancer. Conveniently, dietary changes that are currently recommended for prostate cancer prevention align with a heart healthy diet known as the Mediterranean diet.

The Mediterranean diet was initially encouraged due to its association with lower frequency of heart disease, diabetes and obesity. Recently, these benefits have been recognized for the potential to prevent prostate cancer. An easy way to begin to take advantage of this diet is focus on protein intake.

Protein-rich lean meat like fish or chicken in small portions can be substituted for huge pieces of steak, beef or pork. Additionally, protein-rich foods such as beans, nuts and wild rice can be added and are full of healthier forms of fat known as unsaturated and monounsaturated.

You can change the type of fat you consume by, for example, cooking with olive oil instead of butter, shortening or lard. Decreasing intake of saturated fat and increasing unsaturated 'good' fats is associated with decreased cholesterol levels and obesity and has been shown to inhibit prostate cancer growth. It's important to pair a healthy protein and fat intake with more fruits and vegetables.

There are elements in food not found on the nutrition facts label that also may have a role in cancer prevention. Perhaps the best understood for prostate cancer is lycopene, which is a natural pigment that gives red and pink foods its color. The highest amount of lycopene is found in cooked and canned tomatoes as well as pasta and pizza sauce, red peppers and watermelon. You will want to eat more of these foods but be cautious and select those with a lower sodium content.

Lycopene has been studied as a prostate health nutrient for years. Currently there are 20 studies on clinicaltrials.gov investigating the role of this powerful pigment in prostate cancer prevention. Other foods and supplements containing green tea, pomegranate, flaxseed and soy ingredients may also be beneficial for prostate cancer prevention but currently the research is not completely clear.

If you don't eat fruits and vegetables now and you like lots of meat, changing to a diet with more fruits and vegetables might seem overwhelming at first, but small, gradual changes may make a diet more approachable and can still to meaningful changes in health. An important first step is to study your current diet to decide what specifically should be improved on — an exercise usually more productive with the help of a registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN).

Today, there is no food or dietary supplement that cures or prevents prostate cancer. Humans are a combination of genetic and environmental factors that can lead to the presence or absence of any disease. Instead, this diet can empower men to simultaneously eat a heart healthy diet and proactively incorporate nutrition that is currently understood to have an association with lower rates of prostate cancer. A great place to learn about diet and prostate cancer is at <https://www.aicr.org/cancer-survival/cancer/prostate-cancer>.

Professor emeritus Kathy Kolasa, a registered dietitian nutritionist and Ph.D., is an affiliate professor in the Brody School of Medicine at ECU. Contact her at kolasaka@ecu.edu.



KATHY KOLASA

A good soup has layers, and a cheese rind

Sometimes, all we need is soup. It's not a cure-all, but sometimes it's just right. A pot of soup feeds a family; it warms and nourishes, and fills our kitchen with delicious aromas. It's also an efficient meal, using up vegetables and leftovers and relying on pantry staples. It's homey and undemanding, yet with a few key ingredients, a simple pot of soup can magically transform into a satisfying and delicious one-pot meal.

Minestrone is a classic Italian vegetable soup, brimming with diced vegetables swirling in a tomato-infused stock. It's rustic, filling and layered with flavor. The

stock can be vegetable or chicken, to which tomatoes are added — not to dominate, but just enough to infuse the stock with brightness and complexity. Carrots and onions form the base for the vegetables, often with celery or fennel added to the aromatic mix.

From that point, other vegetables can be added to your liking. Chopped leafy greens, diced root vegetables and zucchini are all great contenders. In addition to vegetables, pasta and/or beans are frequently included in minestrone, providing satisfying substance, and when the two ingredients are combined, they create an economical source of protein.

A key final ingredient pulls this soup together: a hunk of cheese rind, either Parmesan or Pecorino Romano. Cheese rind is a wonderful secret ingredient to a tomato-and-vegetable soup (and a terrific way to use up any cheese remnants). As the rind simmers in the stock, it will break down, imparting a kick of salt and an umami depth of flavor, while adding body to the soup.

Finally, when prepping the soup, try to uniformly chop and dice the vegetables. Not only is it visually appealing, but it somehow makes the soup taste even better — perhaps because it's easier to get a little bite of everything in each spoonful.

Italian Minestrone

Active Time: 30 minutes

Total Time: 30 minutes

Yield: Serves 4



LYNDA BALSLEV



LYNDA BALSLEV/TASTEFOOD

Italian minestrone.

Ingredients:

1 tablespoon olive oil
1 medium yellow onion, chopped
2 carrots, chopped
1 small fennel bulb, trimmed, fronds removed, diced
1 medium yellow potato, peeled, diced
1 small zucchini, seeded and diced
4 to 6 cups vegetable or chicken stock
1 (15-ounce) can chopped plum tomatoes
1 bay leaf
1 teaspoon dried oregano
1 teaspoon dried thyme
1 teaspoon salt, or to taste
½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1 (2-inch) chunk Parmesan or Pecorino Romano cheese rind

1 (15-ounce) can cannellini or northern beans, drained

1 heaping cup coarsely chopped greens, such as Swiss chard, kale or spinach leaves

Fresh Italian parsley leaves for garnish

Steps:

Finely grate Parmesan or Pecorino Romano cheese for serving

Heat the oil in a soup pot over medium heat. Add the onion and saute until beginning to soften, about 2 minutes. Add the carrots and fennel and continue to saute until the vegetables brighten in color and are crisp-tender, 2 to 3 minutes more. Add the potato and zucchini and briefly saute, about 1 minute. Add the 4 cups stock, the tomatoes, bay leaf, oregano, thyme,

salt and black pepper. If the soup is too chunky, add more stock to your desired consistency.

Bring the soup to a simmer and submerge the cheese rind in it. Partially cover the pot and simmer over medium-low heat until the potatoes are tender, about 20 minutes. Stir in the beans and greens and simmer until the greens wilt, about 2 minutes more.

Ladle the soup into warm bowls. Garnish with parsley and serve with the grated cheese for sprinkling.

Lynda Balslev is an award-winning cookbook author, recipe developer, tester and editor. Taste Food is distributed by Andrews McMeel Syndication.

Exploring treatments for excessive sweating

QI've read your column for years but have yet to see anything about my problem. I tend to sweat a lot, not under my arms, but in my crotch area. It's embarrassing and even causes me to get a lot of UTIs. I've tried panty liners and medicated powders, wear only cotton underwear, but nothing works. I'm so frustrated. What can I do?

A Excessive sweating that isn't a response to either heat or exertion is known as hyperhidrosis. When sweat glands are overactive in one specific location, it's referred to as focal hyperhidrosis. The condition is believed to arise from overstimulation of the sweat glands by the autonomic nervous system, although why this occurs is unclear.

Excessive sweating in the armpits and around the head and face are the most common types of hyperhidrosis. The folds of skin beneath the breasts are another area of focal hyperhidrosis. Although less common, sweating in the area of the groin is a problem for many women. Researchers

ASK THE DOCTORS



EVE GLAZIER



ELIZABETH KO

recently conducted a survey of close to 2,000 adults who are registered users of the International Hyperhidrosis Society website, found at sweathelp.org. In that survey, 43% of respondents reported experiencing excessive sweating in the groin area.

Our bodies use sweat to stay cool. When certain physiological signals let the brain know the body is at risk of exceeding its optimal temperature range, they direct the sweat glands to release moisture. This results in an evaporative effect, which helps to cool the skin and regulate temperature. And while

sweating in the crotch area is a normal function of this cooling system, sometimes the signals go awry.

Some women find relief with topical antiperspirants. These use chemical compounds to temporarily plug the pores through which sweat exits and reduce the amount of moisture that is released. However, antiperspirants can be irritating to delicate skin and tissues, and they should be kept away from the vagina.

Two therapeutics, which have been approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for excessive underarm sweating, are finding off-label use in other types of focal hyperhidrosis. One, a prescription medication called Qbrexza, is a premoistened towelette saturated with a medication. It is applied once daily to the affected skin. Also approved for excessive underarm sweating is Botulinum toxin A, more widely known as Botox.

Some physicians are reporting success with off-label

uses of these medications, including for hyperhidrosis in the crotch area. However, it's important to understand that neither of these medications are FDA-approved for hyperhidrosis in any region other than the underarms. When it comes to Botox, the amount of the drug required for the crotch area can make the treatment quite costly. It's also very important that the physician providing the treatment is well-versed in the specific injection strategies that are being pioneered.

If you haven't already, please consult with your health care provider. They can help you with strategies to lessen the incidence of UTIs and other infections. They can also offer guidance if you choose to pursue other options.

Eve Glazier, M.D., MBA, is an internist and associate professor of medicine at UCLA Health. Elizabeth Ko, M.D., is an internist and assistant professor of medicine at UCLA Health.