

Diet Can Improve Prostate Cancer Survival

Prostate cancer that has not metastasized can often be survived for long periods of time, but it still represents a major health concern. Therefore, it is important to know how and to what extent post-diagnostic diet affects mortality rates, both cancer-specific and overall. A recent study broke new ground in this realm, finding that higher death rates from cancer and overall death rates were linked to eating a “western” style diet high in processed and red meat, high-fat dairy, and processed grains. Meanwhile a “prudent” style diet of produce, fish, legumes, and whole grains led to lower all-cause mortality rates.

This Physicians’ Health Study examined a new aspect of post-diagnostic consideration for men with prostate cancer, tracking 926 participants’ diets for around 5 years and their mortality for a median of about 10 years. During that time 36% of participants died (17% directly from prostate cancer and 19% from other causes). The results showed those eating the Western diets clearly have reduced survival rates overall and from their cancer. The opposite trend was observed with the prudent diet, though the reduction in cancer-specific mortality was not statistically significant. Also, results demonstrated that the more “Western” a diet participants, the higher their risk of dying overall. Those who ate the most intensely western diets were 2.53 times more likely to die of prostate cancer and 1.67 times as likely to die overall, when compared to people eating a Western diet but in a less extreme form.

Editorial: While a wealth of information already exists connecting diet to various cancers and cardiovascular disease, this may be the first study to demonstrate a link between diet and cancer survival post-diagnosis. The survival benefits of a “Prudent” diet are evident and match nearly all research on other preventative dietary styles. Likewise, the increases in mortality in general and from cancer, that stem from a “Western” dietary style echo patterns from other studies on general preventive care. Most notably these less desirable outcomes are attached to a diet termed “Western” because it closely coincides with foods consumed in overabundance by many Americans.

Bibliography

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[Cancer Prev Res \(Phila\)](#). 2015 Jun;8(6):545-51