

Vegetarians less likely to develop colorectal cancer

A vegetarian diet reduced the risk of colorectal cancer, according to an analysis of a large, prospective study.

Among 77,659 participants in the Adventist Health Study 2, pescovegetarians (ate fish but not other meats) had the lowest adjusted risk of colorectal cancer,

For vegans, the reduction in risk was 16%; for lacto-ovo vegetarians (consumed eggs/dairy), the reduction in risk was 12%; and for semivegetarians (ate meat less than once a week), the reduction in risk was 8%. Only the difference between pescovegetarians and nonvegetarians was statistically significant.

The adjusted overall reduction in risk for all vegetarians was 22%, a significant difference. There were no significant differences between men or women, or between ethnicities.

The increased benefit that pescovegetarians saw may come from fish consumption or other aspects of the diet.

Editorial: Colon cancer is a major cause of cancer death in the US. We have known for a long time that non Western cultures have a much lower incidence of colon cancer. The difference has been attributed to "lifestyle". The current study provide evidence that the lifestyle component that may be the cause is dietary selections.

Bibliography

Michael J. Orlich, MD, PhD; Pramil N. Singh, DrPH; Joan Sabaté, MD, DrPH; et al.

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