

Broccoli may help beat bladder cancer

Eating broccoli may help prevent or slow the spread of bladder cancer, according to preliminary study findings.

Working in the laboratory, U.S. researchers found that certain compounds in broccoli appear to interfere with bladder cancer cells -- especially aggressive cells that tend to spread quickly around the body.

"Preliminary evidence suggests that these compounds may have some biological activity in slowing the growth of bladder cancer cells," study author Dr. Steven Schwartz told Reuters Health.

However, he cautioned that these results are very preliminary, and it's too early to determine, for instance, how much broccoli people need to eat to get this benefit.

"What we do know is eating a variety of fruits and vegetables is certainly beneficial," Schwartz said in an interview.

Previous research has shown that men who eat broccoli regularly are less likely to develop bladder cancer, which kills more than 13,000 Americans each year.

Broccoli and other cruciferous vegetables contain substances that morph into isothiocyanates, which research suggests may fight cancer.

To investigate further, Schwartz and his colleagues at Ohio State University in Columbus added isothiocyanates from broccoli sprouts to different lines of bladder cancer cells. As a result, they "saw a decrease in the growth of the cells," Schwartz noted, particularly in one cell line that is known to spread quickly throughout the body.

Schwartz noted that researchers have known that eating cruciferous vegetables such as broccoli, broccoli sprouts, cauliflower, kale and Brussels sprouts could fight cancer. The latest research, which Schwartz and his team presented July 18 at the annual Institute of Food Technologists meeting in New Orleans, may help explain why, he added.

Schwartz noted that broccoli sprouts appear to carry a higher concentration of isothiocyanates than full-grown broccoli, which suggests sprouts may be even better for the body.

"Eat a variety of vegetables in your diet," Schwartz advised. "Because there's all sorts of compounds we're finding can be healthy and disease-preventive."