

What You Eat Does Affect Your Risk of Developing Bowel Cancer

Bowel cancer, also known as colorectal, rectal and colon cancer, is the third most common cancer in both men and women in Australia and is more common in people over the age of 50.

In 2020 there were 5,322 deaths attributed to bowel cancer in Australia, and 15,494 new cases diagnosed.

In a new study published recently in the *Journal of American Medical Association*, it is now confirmed that what you eat does affect your risk of developing bowel cancer.

In this study, lead researcher Nathorn Chaiyakunapruk, Professor of Pharmacology University of Utah, said, "to date, there has been little synthesis of the strength, precision, and quality of this evidence in aggregate". "Our objective was to grade the evidence from 9954 publications showing meta-analyses of prospective observational studies that assessed the association of dietary patterns, specific foods, food groups, beverages (including alcohol), macronutrients, and micronutrients, with the incidence of bowel cancer data".

This umbrella review found convincing evidence of an association between lower bowel cancer risk and higher intakes of dietary fiber, dietary calcium, and yoghurt and lower intakes of alcohol and red meat. More research is needed on specific foods for which evidence remains suggestive, including other dairy products, whole grains, processed meat,

Conclusions: The findings of this study support existing recommendations for diet in the primary prevention of bowel cancer, emphasizing higher intakes of dietary fiber, calcium, and yogurt and lower intakes of red meat and alcohol. Emerging evidence supports a possible role for overall dietary patterns that, in totality, emphasize habitually consuming fruits, vegetables, grains, and low-fat dairy and reducing red meat and alcohol intake.

More research is needed on specific foods for which evidence remains suggestive, including other dairy products, whole grains, processed meat, and specific dietary patterns.

It makes sense to encourage a healthy diet, including those rich in fruits, vegetables, grains and low-fat dairy and reducing red meat and excessive alcohol intake. Adherence to a Mediterranean diet, pesce-vegetarian or flexi diet is highly recommended.

Geoff

