

The Latest Research on Tomatoes and Cancer Risk

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This article appears in the [September 3, 2015 issue](#) of [AICR's eNews](#).



As our long hot summer begins turning to fall, many gardens are offering up their last gasp, in the form of a final crop of juicy red tomatoes. Tomatoes are packed with nutrients and other compounds well studied for their role in cancer protection. But how do tomatoes link to cancer risk? Our expanded and updated entry on tomatoes in our popular [Foods That Fight Cancer web tool](#) that has the current evidence.

Here, you'll find information on the new and emerging research linking tomatoes to cancer protection – both in the lab and human studies. You'll also find tips on selecting and preparing each food, a tested AICR recipe that shows it off to its best advantage, and more.

[Foods that Fight Cancer: Tomatoes](#)

Tomatoes and prostate cancer

Science is always evolving and that holds true with respect to a phytonutrient in tomatoes called lycopene, the compound that gives tomatoes their distinctive red color.

In 2007, AICR/WCRF's expert report – after collectively analyzing the global evidence on tomatoes and other foods containing lycopene -- concluded there was probable evidence linking tomatoes to lower risk of prostate cancer. But the study of a possible link between tomatoes and other foods containing lycopene and lower prostate cancer risk has continued. The latest analysis of the global research, released in our Continuous Update Project report on prostate cancer, found the evidence is now much

less clear.

The report found that current evidence does not support a clear link between tomatoes (or other lycopene-containing foods like watermelon) and lower risk for prostate cancer.

Note – that does not mean there is no link between a diet high in tomatoes and lower risk for prostate cancer. This new judgment simply reflects the fact that researchers have learned a great deal more about the nature of prostate cancer in recent years, and the available studies reflect that. Today's study authors can make finer distinctions about things like the stages of prostate cancer that older studies could not.

Tomatoes as part of the whole

What has not changed, however, is that tomatoes remain a plant food that belongs at the center of a healthy diet, alongside other colorful vegetables and fruits, hearty whole grains and fiber-rich beans. Diets that revolve around plant foods help prevent the buildup of excess body fat, which has been shown to be a cause of ten different kinds of cancer.

You can read the more about the tomato-cancer link, along with numerous other foods being investigated for their cancer-protective potential, in our [Foods That Fight Cancer](#).