

Eat fresh fruits and green leafy vegetables to prevent diabetes

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Boston, February 16: A study has found that consumption of 5 or more servings of fruits and vegetables a day can slash the risk of developing Type 2 diabetes, a serious and debilitating disease that becomes progressively more common with age and obesity.

Full Article:

The study was conducted by the scientists at the Tulane School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine in New Orleans and the Harvard School of Public Health in Boston.

Diabetes is a metabolic disorder, which results from the deficiency of insulin in the body, leading to excessive sugar build up. It is the fifth leading cause of death and disability in the United States and seventh leading cause of death and disability in Canada. The disease can cause serious health complications including eye damage, heart disease, kidney failure, impotence.

Dr. Lydia Bazzano, an assistant professor of epidemiology in Tulane, said, “Based on the results of our study, people who have risk factors for diabetes may find it helpful to fill up on leafy greens like lettuces, kale and spinach and whole fruits, like apples, bananas, oranges and watermelon rather than drink fruit juices, which deliver a big sugar load in a liquid form that gets absorbed rapidly.”

The study published in the April 4, 2008, online issue of Diabetes Care also found that one serving of fruit juice a day increased the risk of Type 2 diabetes in females.

Bazzano and the team tracked 71,346 female nurses and studied their eating habits for 18 years. The nurses were in between 38 and 63 years of age, and diabetes free at the start of the study (data courtesy of Nurses’ Health Study from 1984 to 2002).

They determined that the link between the eating fresh fruits and green leafy veggies and decreased diabetes risk, existed irrespective of other factors, such as family history, weight and smoking.

Moreover, the researchers also found that females who consumed more fresh fruits and veggies were mostly older, non-smokers and more physically active.

They also advised about replacing refined grains and white potatoes with whole fruit or green leafy vegetable servings as white flours and potatoes have been associated with an increased risk of diabetes.

Type 2 diabetes, also known as ‘lifestyle diabetes’ is characterized by tissue-wide insulin resistance and varies widely; it sometimes progresses to loss of beta cell function. Type 2 diabetes can lead to kidney failure, limb loss, blindness, hypertension and cardiovascular disease.

Nearly 75 percent of the diabetic patients die of cardiovascular disease. The causes of type 2 diabetes are known and in some cases, it can be prevented, however there is no cure for type 2 diabetes.