

# Preventing cancer, quite naturally

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Exciting headlines about the cancer-preventing potential of berries, red wine, and other foods are in the news almost every day. An article in the current issue of Chemical & Engineering News (C&EN), ACS' weekly newsmagazine, highlights the researchers trying to make medicines based on substances in those foods and turn their potential into reality.

C&EN Associate Editor Carmen Drahl notes that scientists have tried for years to develop drugs that reduce the risk of cancer, with only a few successes. So-called "[natural products](#)" — chemicals derived from plants and other living organisms — are the basis for almost one-third of today's prescription medicines. Hints about their potential effects in preventing cancer thrust natural products into the research spotlight.

The article described how scientists, sifting through natural products from fruits and vegetables, have identified a variety of promising candidates. These include resveratrol, a substance found in [red wine](#), and abyssinone, a substance found in a plant from traditional Chinese medicine. Scientists are also studying potential cancer-preventing substances in deep-ocean microbes. Even though some natural products have failed to prevent [cancer](#) in human clinical trials, Drahl cites continued optimism that the search will pay off.

**More information:** This story is available at [www.cen-online.org/science/88/8825sci1.html](http://www.cen-online.org/science/88/8825sci1.html)

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