

Health benefits of eating tomatoes emerge

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Eating more tomatoes and tomato products can make people healthier and decrease the risk of conditions such as cancer, osteoporosis and cardiovascular disease, according to a review article the *American Journal of Lifestyle Medicine*, (published by SAGE).

Of all the non-starchy vegetables, Americans eat more [tomatoes](#) and tomato products than any others. Researchers Britt Burton-Freeman, PhD, MS, and Kristin Reimers, PhD, RD of the National Center for [Food Safety](#) & Technology, Illinois Institute of Technology and ConAgra Foods, Inc., looked at the current research to discover the role tomato products play in health and disease risk reduction.

The researchers found that tomatoes are the biggest source of dietary lycopene; a powerful antioxidant that, unlike nutrients in most fresh fruits and vegetables, has even greater bioavailability after cooking and processing. Tomatoes also contain other protective mechanisms, such as antithrombotic and anti-inflammatory functions. Research has additionally found a relationship between eating tomatoes and a lower risk of certain cancers as well as other conditions, including [cardiovascular disease](#), [osteoporosis](#), ultraviolet light–induced skin damage, and cognitive dysfunction.

Tomatoes are widely available, people of all ages and cultures like them, they are cost-effective, and are available in many forms. "Leveraging emerging science about tomatoes and tomato products may be one simple and effective strategy to help individuals increase vegetable intake, leading to improved overall eating patterns, and ultimately, better

health." write the authors.

"Tomatoes are the most important non-starchy vegetable in the American diet. Research underscores the relationship between consuming tomatoes and reduced risk of cancer, heart disease, and other conditions," the authors conclude. "The evidence also suggests that consumption of tomatoes should be recommended because of the nutritional benefits and because it may be a simple and effective strategy for increasing overall vegetable intake."

The article is particularly timely since the recently released Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2010 moved tomatoes to a newly established category of "orange/red" fruits and vegetables to encourage higher consumption of these healthy foods.

More information: The article "Tomato Consumption and Health: Emerging Benefits" in *American Journal of Lifestyle Medicine* is available free for a limited time at: [ajl.sagepub.com/content/early/ ... 387488.full.pdf+html](http://ajl.sagepub.com/content/early/.../387488.full.pdf+html)

Provided by SAGE Publications

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