

Eating a Mediterranean diet could cut womb cancer risk

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Credit: Wikipedia.

Women who eat a Mediterranean diet could cut their risk of womb cancer by more than half (57 per cent), according to a study published today in the *British Journal of Cancer*.

The Italian researchers looked at the diets of over 5,000 Italian women to see how closely they stuck to a Mediterranean [diet](#) and whether they went on to develop [womb cancer](#) ([endometrial cancer](#)).

The team broke the Mediterranean diet down into nine different components and measured how closely women stuck to them. The diet includes eating lots of vegetables, fruits and nuts, pulses, cereals and potatoes, fish, monounsaturated fats but little meat, milk and other dairy products and [moderate alcohol intake](#).

Researchers found that women who adhered to the Mediterranean diet most closely by eating between seven and nine of the beneficial food groups lowered their risk of womb cancer by more than half (57 per cent).

Those who stuck to six elements of the diet's components reduced their risk of womb cancer by 46 per cent and those who stuck to five reduced their risk by a third (34 per cent).

But those women whose diet included fewer than five of the components did not lower their risk of womb cancer significantly.

Dr Cristina Bosetti, lead author from the IRCCS-Istituto di Ricerche Farmacologiche, said: "Our research shows the impact a [healthy balanced diet](#) could have on a woman's risk of developing womb cancer. This adds more weight to our understanding of how our every day choices, like what we eat and how active we are, affect our risk of cancer."

The study was funded by the Italian Foundation for Cancer Research, the Swiss National Science Foundation and the Swiss League Against Cancer.

Each year in the UK there are around 8,500 new cases of womb cancer, and rates have increased by around half since the early 1990s in Great Britain.

Dr Julie Sharp, Cancer Research UK's head of health information, said: "While we know that getting older and being overweight both increase a woman's risk of womb cancer, the idea that a Mediterranean diet could help reduce the risk needs more research. This is partly because this study was based on people remembering what they had eaten in the past.

"Cancer risk is affected by our age and our genes but a healthy lifestyle can also play a part in reducing the [risk](#) of some cancers. Not smoking, keeping a healthy weight, being active, eating healthily and cutting down on alcohol helps to stack the odds in your favour."

More information: Filomeno et al. Mediterranean diet and risk of endometrial cancer: a pooled analysis of three Italian case-control studies. *British Journal of Cancer*. [DOI: 10.1038/bjc.2015.153](https://doi.org/10.1038/bjc.2015.153)

Provided by Cancer Research UK

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