

# Health Bulletin

## Lycopene: An Antioxidant With Many Benefits

(NAPSA)—Have you had your lycopene today?

If you've consumed any tomato, watermelon, guava or pink grapefruit, then you have indeed had a taste of this powerful carotenoid, an antioxidant that has been shown to reduce the risk of cancer and heart disease, and protect against sun damage.

However, according to the United States Department of Agriculture, more than 80 percent of Americans do not eat the recommended five servings of fruits and vegetables each day, thus they could be depriving themselves of lycopene's benefits. Fortunately for those who don't eat foods rich in lycopene, it is also possible to get the recommended amount of it (three to six milligrams a day) through a dietary supplement that contains lycopene.

One medium-sized tomato contains about 4.25 milligrams of lycopene. Unlike many other nutrients which are destroyed or lost in the cooking process, lycopene actually becomes *more* accessible when tomatoes are processed and/or cooked with oil. So pizza, ketchup and spaghetti sauce may provide even more of it than raw tomatoes.

A study of 1,379 men found that those who consumed a lycopene-rich diet were half as likely to suffer a heart attack as those with little or no lycopene in their diet. Plus, it is believed that low levels of lycopene may play a role in the development of artery disease. In addition to the heart-related benefits of lycopene, stud-



ies have linked the antioxidant to reduced risk of prostate, breast, digestive tract, colon, rectum, stomach, lung and cervical cancer.

Further, lycopene, which gives tomatoes their rich red color, can help keep people from seeing red—on their skin. It can protect the skin from exposure to the sun. Specifically, in the short term it provides a sun protection factor of between two and four from the inside, and in the long term can protect the skin from damage caused by ultraviolet rays, which may lead to cancer.

To learn more about the long-term health benefits of lycopene and other antioxidants, visit [www.freshstarts.com](http://www.freshstarts.com), an interactive Web site for adults, teachers and children. Additional information is also available through BASF Corporation's Team Antioxidant poster/brochure. For a free copy of this educational poster/brochure, send your name and address to "Team Antioxidant: Because Your Body is a Battleground," 3550 Young Place, Lynchburg, VA 24501.