

NUTRITION NEWS

Red Means Go With Lycopene

by Dr. Ronald Hoffman

(NAPSA)—Most of us are aware that antioxidants have been given the green light from doctors and scientists—but many people may not know that one antioxidant in particular has been associated with fighting prostate cancer: lycopene.

Antioxidants help to prevent oxidation in the body. They quench free radical molecules that can lead to damage in the blood vessels and vital tissues.

Lycopene is a natural plant pigment and is one of the most potent antioxidants available to us. Lycopene provides foods such as tomatoes, tomato-based products, watermelon and pink grapefruit with their natural red hues.

Several observational studies have shown that the more tomato-based products—such as pizza and pasta sauce—men eat, the lower their risk for developing prostate cancer. Many of these studies have linked such benefits to the lycopene found in those foods. More recently, a study demonstrated that pure lycopene supplements may have cancer-fighting or cancer-prevention abilities.

Many studies on cancer now test apoptosis, or the natural elimination of harmful cancer-causing cells. In one study, researchers treated human prostate cancer cells with a supplement called redivivo™ lycopene. Redivivo is a trademark of DSM Nutritional Products. The study was done to determine whether it would induce apoptosis to eliminate the cancer cells or even simply suppress their growth. The



photo by Alana Cowan

Dr. Ronald Hoffman says lycopene may prevent cancer cell development.

results showed that cancer cells harvested without lycopene continued to flourish, while those treated with redivivo lycopene were either eliminated by apoptosis or had their cell cycle slowed down, resulting in a reduced number of cancer cells being present.

Scientists have also found health benefits for lycopene as a regular part of the diet. Sadly, lycopene-rich fresh produce is not plentiful year-round in many parts of the country. However, you can get lycopene throughout the year from cooked tomato products and dietary supplements.

• *Dr. Ronald Hoffman is one of America's foremost complementary medicine practitioners. He is author of numerous books and articles for the public and for health professionals, and is host of the popular, nationally syndicated radio program "Health Talk" (www.drhoffman.com), heard weeknights and Saturdays on the WOR Radio Network.*