

UC San Diego Launches Nation's First Non-Supplement Study on Prostate Cancer/Diet

Less meat, more vegetables, an active lifestyle, and phone calls

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Kim Edwards

The vegetables most boys wanted to avoid in childhood - such as kale and broccoli - just may be the answer to staving off prostate cancer growth in adulthood. A new clinical trial at UC San Diego Moores Cancer Center will evaluate whether or not a change in diet, reinforced with telephone counseling and exercise, can stop or delay the progression of prostate cancer.

"Ours is the first study to focus on changing the entire lifestyle rather than just giving the participants a supplement pill," said J. Kellogg Parsons, MD, MHS, urologic oncologist at UC San Diego Moores Cancer Center. "We focus on more vegetables, less meat, and comprehensive counseling which encourages a more active lifestyle."

Participants in the Men's Eating and Living (MEAL) Study will eat at least seven servings of colorful, strong-flavored produce per day, with an emphasis on cruciferous vegetables and tomato products, as well as whole grains, beans or other legumes, and fruit. "Evidence in previous studies suggests that a diet high in vegetable intake and low in meat and fat intake may decrease the risk of prostate cancer progressing or even beginning," said Parsons.

Approximately 100,000 men are diagnosed with early stage, low risk prostate cancer every year in the United States. In general, low risk prostate cancer is a slow growing disease and many of these men may not require immediate treatment. Unnecessarily aggressive treatment - with surgery or radiation - diminishes quality of life for thousands of men each year. UC San Diego researchers see an opportunity to refine treatment paradigms within this patient population.

"Diet provides the participant/patient with a way to take control and fight what can be a distressing diagnosis," explained Parsons. "If diet is related to the risk of prostate cancer, it may well exert an impact on the earliest phases of the disease. One of the implicit messages that participants will take from this study is that low-risk prostate cancer can often be a condition to monitor: it is not a death sentence, nor is it a condition that necessarily requires radical, immediate, life-changing intervention."

Eligible participants are males up to 80 years old, who have been diagnosed with non-aggressive prostate cancer within the last two years, are in the early stages, and have not yet received treatment of any kind.

Media Contact: Kim Edwards, 619-543-6163, kedwards@ucsd.edu