



## MEAL Study Builds the Case for Controlling Cancer with a Healthy Diet

### Promoting “Thriviership” Not Just “Survivorship”

One way to tell the importance of a medical study is to look at who is sponsoring it. Going by that rule, you know that the Men’s Eating and Living (MEAL) Study—sponsored by the National Cancer Institute, the US Department of Defense, and the Prostate Cancer Foundation—caught the interest of those in the highest echelons of the medical community.

According to the University of California-San Diego Moores Cancer Center, which organized the research, the MEAL Study investigates whether cancer patients can be encouraged to eat more healthily and whether a healthy diet increases their levels of potentially cancer-fighting chemicals that fruits and vegetables contain in abundance.

The researchers aim is to decrease disease progression and anxiety in prostate cancer patients being treated with “active surveillance,” during which cancer is carefully monitored for signs of progression.

MEAL Study participants are men aged 50 to 80 years with prostate cancer diagnosed within 24 months. They receive both telephone counseling and written materials that include dietary targets, strategies to achieve them, healthy recipes, and articles about advances in prostate cancer control through diet.

Participants are encouraged to eat more vegetables—particularly cruciferous vegetables and tomatoes—as well as whole grains and legumes. Researchers have noted the intake of these foods and participants’ blood levels of cancer-fighting carotenoid chemicals.

The scientists found that dietary counseling increased the amount of vegetables and fruits eaten and decreased the intake of fats. It also significantly, increased blood levels of carotenoids found in the patients.

The MEAL Study joins extensive research in the area of cancer control and diet, some of which is summarized in the Prostate Cancer Foundation’s online *Nutrition, Exercise, and Prostate Cancer Guide*. The guide concludes that a healthy lifestyle can indeed slow prostate cancer growth, with the overall goal of helping a cancer patient achieve “thrivership” and not just survivorship.

## GLOSSARY

### Words to Chew On

**Cruciferous vegetables**—Includes cauliflower, cabbage, watercress, turnip, mustard, and broccoli.

**Legumes**—Peas, beans, and pulses, including green peas, navy beans, lentils, soybeans, and peanuts.

**Carotenoids**—Chemicals that give vegetables their color. Scientists believe they have cancer-fighting properties. They are found in orange fruits and vegetables as carotene; in leafy greens as lutein; and in red fruits and vegetables as lycopene.

### Eat the Rainbow!

The call to eat healthily by including lots of colorful fruits and vegetables in your diet isn’t just something kids need to hear.

According to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, diets rich in fruits and vegetables may reduce the risk of cancer and other chronic diseases. Low fat, low calorie fruits and vegetables also provide essential vitamins, minerals, fiber, and other substances important for good health.

**Red/Pink**—Tomatoes, red bell pepper, guava, watermelon, pink grapefruit

**Orange**—Sweet potato, carrot, cantaloupe

**Yellow**—Yellow bell pepper, pineapple, corn, banana, yellow squash

**Green**—Avocado, zucchini, Brussels sprouts, asparagus, lettuce, broccoli, kale, garden peas, chard, spinach

**Purple**—Eggplant, blackberries, beetroot, blueberries, plums

Learn more at [cdc.gov/nutrition/everyone](http://cdc.gov/nutrition/everyone)