

# Vitamin D may lower colon cancer risk

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People with higher levels of vitamin D in their blood may have a reduced risk of developing colorectal cancer, says [research published this week online from the British Medical Journal](#).

The study, part of the European Prospective Investigation into Cancer and Nutrition (EPIC), followed 1248 patients who developed colorectal cancer and compared them to 1248 patients who did not develop the cancer. Researchers found that patients who had the highest pre-cancer concentrations of vitamin D in their blood had about a 40 percent lower risk of developing colorectal cancer.

In an interview with Reuters, EPIC investigator Mazda Jenab, PhD, said although the findings showed lower risk, "... this has to be balanced with caution regarding the potential toxic effects of too much vitamin D and the fact that very little is known about the association of vitamin D with either increased or reduced risk of other cancers."

Jenab added, "the key take home message for colorectal cancer prevention is: stop smoking, increase physical activity, reduce obesity and abdominal fatness, and limit intakes of alcohol and red and processed meats."

The EPIC study is one of the largest studies on how diet and health can impact the incidence of cancer. From 1992 to 1999, the EPIC study recruited over a half a million people in ten European countries to participate. Many findings have emerged from the study including research showing an increased risk of breast cancer in obese adults and research showing an increased risk of colon cancer in people who consume larger quantities of red and/or processed meats. For more information on the EPIC study, click [here](#).