

Rumor: Eating raw garlic reduces lung cancer risk

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Does eating some raw garlic at least two times a week cut the risk of lung cancer by nearly half for non-smokers and almost one-third for smokers?

TRUE: So says the latest study touting garlic's benefits, though experts urge it's best to quit smoking and eat lots of veggies

Eating raw garlic at least twice a week appears to slice the risk of lung cancer by 44 percent in non-smokers and 30 percent in smokers, according to a *Cancer Prevention Research* study prompting buzz. It's among a number of studies going back decades showing that garlic cuts lung cancer risk, though not every study has done so, a cancer expert told MSN News.

Stomach cancer is an even more upbeat story, as some compounds in garlic (at least in the lab) are "quite good at killing *Helicobacter pylori*, which is the bacterium that causes stomach cancer," John D. Potter, MD, University of Washington epidemiology professor and a senior advisor at Seattle's Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, told MSN News via email.

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Researchers in the latest study, from China, found a correlation between raw-garlic eaters and lowered cancer risk, but said more research is needed. "It's great news to have more modern, scientific validation for a 4,000-year-plus clinical tradition of using garlic — in culinary doses — to promote health and prevent disease," naturopathic physician Orna Izakson, adjunct faculty member at National College of Natural Medicine in Portland, Ore., told MSN News.

Don't look at garlic as magic

Don't "imagine that there is just one (or even a few) magic foods that will protect us," Potter said. Eat a well-balanced, plant-based diet with as wide a variety of plant foods as you can manage to cut your risk of lung and stomach cancers, Potter said. Garlic can be among choices, he said, but cancer fighters also include onions and flavonoid-rich apples, pears and others.

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"The most important thing to do to prevent lung cancer," he said, "is DON'T SMOKE: don't start — and if you have started, give it up now."

