

## **Phytoestrogens may protect against endometrial cancer**

Source: Journal of the National Cancer Institute 2003; 95: 1158-64

Dietary phytoestrogen intake may have a small but significant effect on women's risk of endometrial cancer.

Certain dietary phytoestrogens may protect against endometrial cancer, US study findings suggest. Dr. Pamela Horn-Ross (Northern California Cancer Center, Union City, USA) and colleagues note that phytoestrogens (i.e., weak estrogens found in plant foods) may have antiestrogenic effects."

Postulating that these compounds could, therefore, reduce the risk of endometrial cancer, the researchers collected dietary information from 500 African-American, Latina, and white women aged 35-79 years who were diagnosed with endometrial cancer between 1996 and 1999. In addition, 470 healthy women of similar age and ethnicity were assessed. The subsequent analysis particularly focused on dietary consumption of three classes of phytoestrogens: isoflavones, coumestans and lignans.

The results showed that women who consumed the highest levels of isoflavones and lignans had a significantly lower risk of endometrial cancer than those with the lowest consumption, and this association was strongest in postmenopausal women. Obese women with low phytoestrogen consumption had the highest risk of endometrial cancer.

"Some phytoestrogenic compounds, at the levels consumed in the typical American-style diet, are associated with reduced risk of endometrial cancer," the researchers conclude.

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## **Vitamin C supplements beneficial during IVF treatment**

Source:

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*Investigating the impact of vitamin C supplementation on IVF outcomes.*

Vitamin C supplementation may have a direct, favorable influence on IVF outcomes, but this beneficial effect appears to be attenuated by smoking, say researchers.

Prof. Igor Crha and colleagues from Masaryk University in Brno, Czech Republic, studied the influence of vitamin C on infertility treatment in 76 women undergoing IVF embryo transfer cycles. Thirty-eight women were assigned to receive vitamin C (ascorbic acid) in a daily oral dose of 500 mg,

while the control group received no supplements. In each group, half of the women were smokers, and half non-smokers. Urinary and follicular fluid levels of ascorbic acid were measured at baseline, and at the time of oocyte retrieval.

After treatment, ascorbic acid levels in the follicular fluid were significantly higher in women who had received vitamin C supplements than in those who had not, indicating a local effect on the ovaries. In addition, the pregnancy rate was significantly higher in the vitamin C group than the controls (34 percent versus 24 percent). However, this effect was significantly more pronounced in non-smokers than smokers

The findings support the benefits of vitamin C supplementation during IVF treatment, but the negative effect of smoking may be "a reason for asking women to cease smoking prior to infertility treatment," say the researchers.