



Quick Bites — Tomatoes

The tomato's red hue comes chiefly from a phytochemical called lycopene. Tomatoes have attracted particular attention from prostate cancer researchers because lycopene and its related compounds tend to concentrate in tissues of the prostate.

AICR's second expert report, Nutrition, Physical Activity, and the Prevention of Cancer: A Global Perspective, found substantial and convincing evidence that foods containing lycopene probably protect against prostate cancer.

In animal models, consumption of tomato compounds has been linked to large decreases in prostate cancer risk. Moreover, there is evidence that this cancer-fighting potential is increased if tomatoes are consumed in a processed form that allows these natural compounds to be released and more easily absorbed, such as tomato sauce, tomato paste or tomato juice.

Lycopene, a powerful antioxidant, together with a group of related compounds collectively called the "red family," has displayed anti-cancer potential in a variety of laboratory studies. In the laboratory, tomato components have stopped the proliferation of several other cancer cells types, including breast, lung, and endometrial.

Although the evidence suggests it is likely that foods containing lycopene, including tomatoes, offer cancer protection, AICR stresses the importance of eating a variety of plant foods to ensure the most protection against cancer development. No food in isolation can effectively lower cancer risk.



- From AICR Health Talk - www.aicr.org

Did You Know?

It is easier for the body to absorb lycopene from tomatoes once they have been processed or cooked, like the ones in this recipe.



Tilapia with Warm Tomato Salsa

Makes 4 servings.

Per serving: 220 calories, 7 g total fat (1.5 g saturated fat), 10 g carbohydrate, 30 g protein, 3 g dietary fiber, 210 mg sodium.

Ingredients:

1 Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil	3/4 cup chopped onion
1 large garlic clove, finely chopped	1 1/4 lbs. tilapia filets
4 oil-cured or Greek olives, pitted and cut in thin strips	Olive oil cooking spray
1 Tbsp. small capers, rinsed and drained	Salt and pepper to taste
1 1/2 lbs. beefsteak-style tomatoes, peeled, seeded and chopped (see note)	

Directions:

1. In medium skillet, heat oil over medium-high heat. Add onions and cook for 1 minute. Add garlic and cook until onions are translucent, 4 minutes, stirring often. Add tomatoes and cook until they release liquid and are slightly soft but still holding their shape, about 4 minutes, stirring occasionally. Mix in olives and capers. Season salsa to taste with pepper. Set salsa aside, or transfer to container, cool, seal and refrigerate for up to 24 hours. To warm, heat salsa in small saucepan over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until lukewarm, 4-5 minutes.
2. Lightly season fish with salt and pepper on both sides. Coat medium skillet liberally with cooking spray and set over medium-high heat. Arrange tilapia in the pan, topside down, and cook until crusty on bottom, about 4 minutes. Using large pancake turner, turn filets and cook until white in center at thickest part, 2 to 4 minutes. Place each filet on dinner plate. Spoon one-fourth of warm salsa over fish and serve.

For more information:
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