

Going VEGAN slashes the risk of prostate cancer by a third

By **Fiona Macrae** Science Editor For The Daily Mail,
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Going vegan could keep prostate cancer away. Men who avoided eating all animal products, including eggs and dairy, were a third less likely than others to develop the disease, scientists found. In the first study of its kind, researchers from Loma Linda University in California tracked the health of more than 26,000 men aged 30-plus for five years. All had filled in detailed questionnaires about their diets, which were used to work out if they were vegetarian, including vegan. Some 1,079 men had been diagnosed with prostate cancer by the end of the study.



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Men who avoided eating all animal products, including eggs and dairy, were a third less likely than others to develop the disease

The vegetarians, who avoided meat but ate eggs and dairy products, were no less likely to develop the disease than the meat-eaters.

However, eschewing all animal-related foods cut the odds of the cancer by 35 per cent, the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition reports.

It is thought the result isn't just due to the lack of meat in their diet.

Instead, it is likely that the vitamins and minerals in a fruit and vegetable-rich vegan diet, as well as inclusion of soy, a meat substitute, provides protection against the illness.

Veganism may be more beneficial than simple vegetarianism because followers tend to eat these foods in particularly high quantities. Plus, they avoid fatty dairy products.

Dr Panagiota Mitrou, of the World Cancer Research Fund, which funded the study, said: 'With prostate cancer being the most common cancer in men in the UK, prevention is key if we are to see a decrease in the number of men developing the disease.'

He added: 'This exciting research has, for the first time, helped fill some vital gaps in our knowledge about eating patterns and the prevention of prostate cancer.'

'Although these results are exciting, more studies are needed to demonstrate the strength of the link between a vegan diet and reducing the risk of prostate cancer.'

Jimmy Pierce, spokesman for the Vegan Society, said the evidence of the health benefits of a vegan diet is now overwhelming and it is time to dispel the notion that a man must eat meat to be macho.

Prostate cancer is the most common cancer in British men, with more than 43,000 cases and almost 11,000 deaths a year.



Vegetarians who avoided meat but still ate eggs and dairy products were just as likely to develop the disease than the meat-eaters

It isn't known how long the men had been vegan.

This means it isn't clear whether a sudden change in diet in middle age will help ward off prostate cancer during the next few years, or if a man would have to avoid meat for decades to see the benefits.

However, going vegan may have other, less welcome, consequences.

A recent study found that vegetarians and vegans had lower sperm counts than other men - and the sperm they did make was of poorer quality.

The [American Society of Reproductive Medicine's](#) annual conference in Honolulu heard that that soy products eaten as meat and dairy substitutes might be at the root of the problem.

The researchers said that while it is difficult to advise men not to be vegetarian, they should avoid eating soy in the two to three months before starting to try for a family.