

Soya beans may hold the key to conquering cancer

THE battle to beat some of Britain's biggest cancer killers could be aided by the simple soya bean.



Medical research suggests soya beans could help combat cancer

New research shows that powerful proteins found in the health-boosting legumes block the growth of bowel, liver and lung cancers.

Collectively, these claim the lives of 55,000 people every year.

The research found that soya bean meal – created after the extraction of oil from soya bean seeds – is rich in protein which makes up 40 per cent of the seeds' nutritional component.

It also contains high levels of oleic acid, a mono-unsaturated omega-9 fatty acid. This helps to reduce the build-up of fat in the arteries which can lead to heart disease and stroke.

In the study, published in the journal *Food Research International*, US scientists at the University of Arkansas looked at the role soya beans could have in the prevention of cancer.

Using a variety of strains high in oleic acid and protein, they monitored the activity between the peptides, or amino acids, from the soya bean meal and various types of human cancer cells.

The study showed that soya bean meal peptides stopped cell growth by a dramatic 73 per cent for bowel cancer, 70 per cent for liver cancer and 68 per cent for lung cancer cells.

The researchers said certain soya bean strains containing high levels of oleic acid could be used as a powerful new food-based cancer buster. Soya bean meal is widely used as a filler and source of protein in animal feed.

The authors wrote: "It could be concluded that peptide fractions derived from meals of high oleic acid soya bean lines have the property of inhibiting cancer cell growth in human cell lines and could have potential nutraceutical use against colon, liver and lung cancers."



Tofu is rich in soya beans

Dr Anthea Martin, of Cancer Research UK, said: "While there is a lot of interest in whether chemicals from foods can prevent or treat cancer, these experiments on soya bean extracts were done using cells grown in the lab.

"This is a long way from saying that these beans can prevent cancer. More work needs to be done to find whether compounds in soya beans might be useful in cutting cancer risk.

"However, we already know that eating a balanced diet, rich in fruit and vegetables and keeping a healthy weight can help reduce the risk of developing cancer."

Previous research has hailed the health benefits of oleic acid, a fat also found in olive oil, grape-seed oil, nuts and avocados as well as soya.

Products containing soya beans include tofu, miso and soya milk.

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