Food Can Change your Life by Meghan Goddard

Since age five we are taught the importance of putting healthy foods into our bodies. But what if the food we ate had more of an effect than helping us grow as we had learned in kindergarten? New research has shown that chili pepper has remarkable effects. Triple-negative breast cancer is an aggressive form of breast cancer and is the most difficult to treat. Patients with this cancer lack epidermal growth factor receptor 2, or HER2, which promotes cancer growth. Ruhr University in Germany studied the effects of capsaicin, the spicy flavor in chili peppers, on replicating triple-growth breast cancer cells. This spicy sensation is sensed through TRP, or transient receptor potential channels, also the channels that sense temperature and pH. In past studies this capsaicin stimuli has induced cell death as well as inhibited cancer cell growth in colon and pancreatic cancer. Ruhr University set out to find its effect on breast cancer and the TRPV1 channel, the specific olfactory channel. Their results were that the capsaicin activated this channel to inhibit cancer cells. These TRPV1 receptors were found in many breast cancer cell cultures. Adding capsaicin, along with helional, the scent of fresh sea breeze, to these cancer cells, their TRPV1 receptors were activated and the tumor cells died or displayed much slower movement, slowing the spread of the cancer cells. These results may allow researchers to design drugs using capsaicin to help treat triple-negative breast cancer in the future(Sandoiu).

Another study at the University of Vermont College of Medicine, of 16,000 U.S. citizens, showed that people who ate red chili peppers and other spicy foods had a lower risk of dying over 18 years than those who did not eat them. Between the National Health and Nutritional Examination Survey III and National Death Index, participants who consumed hot red chili peppers were at a 13% reduced risk of mortality, between 1988 and 1994. Reduced heart disease and stroke were also seen with a high consumption red chili pepper. Like in the cancer study, capsaicin activates TRPV1 which stimulates other mechanisms within our bodies leading to a decrease in obesity. Indirectly, less obesity would mean a decreased risk of heart disease, stroke, and lung disease. This may lead to the development of various dietary suggestions and therapies (Whiteman, 2017a).

Although red chili peppers may do miraculous things for our health, they may not be ideal. Luckily, Dr. Conner at the University of Otago in New Zealand, has found further health benefits of every day fruits and vegetables. Not only are these great for your physical health, again like we have learned since age five, but now they may improve your psychological well-being in just a short period of time. The study showed that when participants ate extra servings of fruits and vegetables for 14-days straight, they reported higher levels of motivation and energy. Along with our good friend the chili pepper, these healthier foods can reduce obesity, diabetes, heart disease, stroke and even some cancers. This has been known for years, but the mental health benefits are fairly new. This study specifically looked at students 18-25. One group was given many servings over fruits and vegetables, while the other group was just sent daily reminders and prepaid vouchers for fruits and vegetables. A psychological assessment showed that those who were given the healthy foods had extreme boosts in their well-being and mental health. They had 3.7 servings on average daily and specifically improved in vitality, flourishing, and motivation, while the other group showed no increase in mental health.

(Whiteman, 2017b) Looking to feel happier and more awake, trying having more than two cups of fruit and more than three cups of vegetables a day. The results are rapid and effective. Add nuts, seeds, grains and seafood’s containing lots of omega-3 fats, and your diet is ensure to be healthy (Tanner).

These are all foods that can do great things for our health. But what is actually harming us? Perhaps sticking to our fruits and vegetables is a good idea. World Health Organization claims that a plant-based diet is the most healthy and some red meat, especially highly processed, may lead to cancer. A 50-gram portions of processed meat eaten dialed can increase your risk of colorectal cancer by 18%. (Whiteman, 2017c). Foods high in salt, over-processed meats, and sugary drinks are the root to unhealthy eating. About 700,000 deaths in 2012 were from heart disease, strokes, and diabetes due to eating habits. Tufts University found an excess of salt being today’s biggest health concern, linked to about 10% of those deaths. The study and US government guidelines recommends no more than one serving of red meat a week, none of which is processed, and only 2,000 mg of salt a day. This is less than a tablespoon (Tanner). Morale of this story, watch your diet, and not for your figure, but for your long term health and mental well-being.

Work Cited

Sandoiu, Ana. "Chili Pepper Compound Can Stop Breast Cancer, Study Finds." Medical News Today. MediLexicon International, 02 Jan. 2017. Web. 24 Mar. 2017.

Tanner, Lindsey. "Bacon, Soda, and Too Few Nuts Tied to a Big Portion of US Deaths - The Boston Globe." BostonGlobe.com. Associated Press, 07 Mar. 2017. Web. 24 Mar. 2017.

Whiteman, Honor (2017a). "Eating Hot Red Chili Peppers May Help Us Live Longer." Medical News Today. MediLexicon International, 16 Jan. 2017. Web. 24 Mar. 2017.

Whiteman, Honor (2017b). "Eating More Fruits, Vegetables Boosts Psychological Well-being." Medical News Today. MediLexicon International, 10 Feb. 2017. Web. 24 Mar. 2017.

Whiteman, Honor (2017c). "Red Meat: Good or Bad for Health?" Medical News Today. MediLexicon International, 25 Jan. 2017. Web. 24 Mar. 2017.