

'Back to basics' tomatoes could replace synthetic drugs



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It's fair to say that in the high-tech world that we now live in, people sometimes forget to go 'back to basics'. Whether they're in need of medicine or technology, nature's inventions are easily rejected as more convenient synthetic options become available.

The science of nutrition has experienced a revival in recent years and the number of medical conferences on the importance of diet has increased greatly. In fact, a recent conference drew attention to the role of tomatoes in

reducing high blood pressure.

High blood pressure affects around 10 million people in the UK alone. Though it rarely causes symptoms, untreated high blood pressure may eventually lead to a stroke, heart attack, heart or renal failure.

Charities such as the British Heart Foundation and The American Heart Association have been drawing attention to the fact that about one third of deaths from heart disease could be avoided by diet and exercise, while the Department of Health in the UK has been campaigning for everyone to eat 5 portions of fruit and vegetables a day. Although making changes to our everyday lives by increasing physical activity, keeping to a healthy weight and reducing salt and alcohol in your diet can reduce the risk of high blood pressure, so can eating tomatoes!

Tomato and tomato extracts such as those found in ketchup, tomato soup and baked beans contain carotenoids such as lycopene, beta carotene and vitamin E which act as antioxidants to combat free radicals and reduce the effects of atherosclerosis (narrowing of the

arteries). Evidence has shown that including tomatoes in the diet improves the elasticity and reduces inflammation of the arterial walls.

The speakers at these conferences are now often high calibre scientists, clinicians and biochemists from renowned international universities. Dr Paran, a consultant physician with a particular interest in hypertension, explained to international delegates that only half of the patients prescribed drugs for the treatment of high blood pressure continued to take pills or tablets for more than a year. In contrast, patients who had been advised to include more fruit in their diet were still following this advice years later.

Dr Paran announced noteworthy statistics regarding the efficacy of Lyc-O-Mato tomato capsules, made from specially modified grown tomatoes, in reducing the blood pressure of volunteers who were unaware of what they were being given. One tomato capsule is equal to about five tomatoes. Dr Paran studied the results of including tomatoes in the diet on patients' systolic and diastolic

blood pressure, serum lipoproteins and plasma homocysteine. All showed significant improvement.

I am pleased that Durbin has been appointed the official distributor of Lyc-O-Mato capsules worldwide. The link between eating tomatoes and a reduced risk of prostate cancer has been known for some time, so it is exciting that this now applies to a reduction of blood pressure. Sometimes, the simplest option may just be the best option! **MEH**

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Durbin PLC is a British company based in South Harrow, London. Established in 1963, the company specialises in supplying quality assured pharmaceuticals, medical equipment and consumable supplies to healthcare professionals and aid agencies in over 180 countries. As well as reacting rapidly to emergency situations, Durbin PLC responds to healthcare supply needs from local project level to national scale programmes.

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