IJBC 2015; 7(2): 55

Antioxidants and Their Role in Prevention of Cancer

The body makes some of the antioxidants it uses to neutralize free radicals which are called endogenous antioxidants. However, the body relies on external (exogenous) sources, primarily the diet, to obtain the rest of the antioxidants it needs. Some studies have indicated that increased levels of exogenous antioxidants prevent free radical damage associated with cancer development. Researchers have investigated whether dietary antioxidant supplements can help lower the risk of developing cancer in humans. Many observational studies, including case-control studies and cohort studies, have been conducted to investigate this subject. Overall, these studies have yielded mixed results. Since observational studies cannot control for biases influencing the study outcomes, the results of any observational study must be viewed with caution. Randomized controlled clinical trials, however, lack most of the biases that limit the reliability of observational studies and are considered to provide the strongest and most reliable evidence of a health-related intervention.

Mohammad Faranoush, MD
Associate professor
Pediatric Hematologist Oncologist

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