

Curcumin halts colorectal cancer, breast cancer by inducing death of cancer cells

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NewsTarget) A new study published in the current issue of the journal *Clinical Cancer Research* reveals that curcumin -- the yellow pigment in turmeric, a major spice in curry -- can stop the growth and spread of colorectal and breast cancers.

Researchers from the University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston (UTMB) found that curcumin inhibits the production of an inflammatory protein that promotes cancer cell growth by dampening the signals of the hormone neurotensin, which spur production of the protein.

"We found that in colon cancer cells, neurotensin increases not just the rate of growth but also other critical things, including cell migration and metastasis," says the study's lead author, professor B. Mark Evers, director of the Sealy Center for Cancer Cell Biology at UTMB.

Researchers believe that because the incidence of cancer is so low in India -- where curry is widely used as a cooking spice and a traditional medicine -- curcumin can be used as a potent anti-cancer medication. Previous lab studies have found the pigment to be effective against skin and breast cancers, in addition to colorectal cancer.

A study published in the Oct. 15, 2005 issue of *Clinical Cancer Research* found that curcumin prevents the progression of breast cancer cells, and also reverses the negative effects of Taxol, a breast cancer drug that can cause breast cancer cells to spread.

A peer-reviewed study by University of Texas researchers appearing in the Aug. 15, 2005 issue of the journal *Cancer* -- the journal of the American Cancer Society -- reveals that curcumin treatments can induce cancer cell death in lines of melanoma.

Nearly 71,000 men and 69,000 women in the United States were diagnosed with colorectal cancer in 2002, killing nearly 57,000 men and women combined. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention list common risk factors as lack of regular physical exercise, high-fat and low-fiber diets, low consumption of fruits and vegetables, obesity and the use of alcohol and tobacco.