

## Health

### Probiotics help

## Men who eat yogurt at lower colon cancer risk

NEW YORK, July 4, (RTRS): Men who eat at least two servings a week of yogurt may be lowering their risk for colorectal cancer, a recent study suggests.

Researchers examined data on 32,606 male and 55,743 female health professionals who had a colonoscopy between 1986 and 2012. Study participants provided detailed information about their health, lifestyle, eating and exercise habits every four years.

Over that time, there were 5,811 cases of colorectal adenomas, or abnormal tissue that can sometimes become cancerous, in men and 8,116 adenomas in women.

Compared to men who didn't eat any yogurt, those who had at least two servings weekly were 19 percent less likely to develop so-called conventional adenomas, the most common kind of polyps found in the colon and rectum during colonoscopies. The yogurt eaters were also 26 percent less likely to develop adenomas with the highest potential to turn into cancer.

### Evidence

"Our data provide novel evidence for the role of yogurt in the early stage of colorectal cancer development," said study coauthor Dr Yin Cao of Washington University School of Medicine in St Louis.

"The findings, if confirmed by future studies, suggest that yogurt might serve as a widely acceptable modifiable factor, which could complement colorectal cancer screening and reduce risk of adenoma among the unscreened," Cao said by email.

Yogurt consumption has been linked to a lower risk of colon and rectal cancer in previous studies, and some scientists think this may be because yogurt promotes the growth of healthy bacteria in the gut. But less is known about how yogurt might impact the potential for people to develop adenomas.

To minimize the risk of colorectal cancer, adults should start getting screened for these tumors at age 45, according to the American Cancer Society. Screening can catch tumors sooner, when they're smaller and easier to treat, increasing survival odds.

Abnormal polyps can take 10 to 15 years to develop into colon cancer, and some adenomas found with screening may never become cancerous or prove fatal.

In the study, yogurt consumption didn't appear to impact the risk of pre-cancerous polyps in women.

The study wasn't designed to prove whether or how yogurt consumption might impact cancer risk. It also didn't examine how many people with polyps went on to develop cancer.

"Much of the benefit from dairy products is thought to come from the calcium they provide, which we know can help prevent colon cancer," said Dr Graham Colditz, associate director for prevention and control at the Alvin J. Siteman Cancer Center in Saint Louis who wasn't involved in the study.

"However, because this study took into account calcium intake, among other dietary factors, these results suggest that yogurt may be lowering risk through an avenue other than calcium," Colditz said

by email.

The probiotics in yogurt may be helping.

"Though it's not clear that probiotics help lower colon cancer risk, there are a number of possible ways they could," Colditz said. "Probiotics may help reduce inflammation - a cancer risk factor - as well as bind and neutralize certain carcinogens in the colon."

People who want to add yogurt to their diet should focus on fat-free or low-fat options, said Vandana Sheth, owner of a Los Angeles based nutrition consulting practice. And they should also pay attention to their overall diet.

"Enjoy a diet filled with lots of vegetables, fruits and whole grains," Sheth, who wasn't involved in the study, said by email. "Limit red meat, especially processed meats like hot dogs and lunch meats, and limit alcohol."

### Also:

**BENI, DRG:** The Ebola clinic stands in a hospital compound in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, a day's drive from the regional capital Goma but close to home for Reuters TV cameraman Djaffar Al Katanty.

He grew up in the region that has become the epicentre of the world's second worst recorded outbreak of the deadly viral disease on record. At the last count at least 1,477 people have died and cases have cropped up in neighbouring Uganda.

"We were seeing people dying day after day. Children being taken away to be buried and ambulances arriving with new cases ... This is my people who are dying," says Katanty.

On this trip, he is visiting a front-line clinic in the border town of Beni with Reuters photographer Baz Ratner and reporter Alessandra Prentice to record the full impact of Ebola and gather data on its spread.

They interview an elderly man who dabs his eyes with a frayed handkerchief as he describes how his granddaughter fell ill then succumbed days later to the haemorrhagic fever. His voice is barely a whisper.

One of the cruellest features of the Ebola infection is the ease with which the virus can spread through contact. Friends, family and medical staff have learned the drill to minimise the chance of that happening. So have Reuters' reporters.

Nobody shakes hands. Nobody embraces in greeting or farewell. There are disinfectant sprays at the entrance and exit.

"It is painful to talk to people who are suffering but not to be able to reach out to them," Katanty says. "It hurts to see people suffering ... and to have to keep a distance."

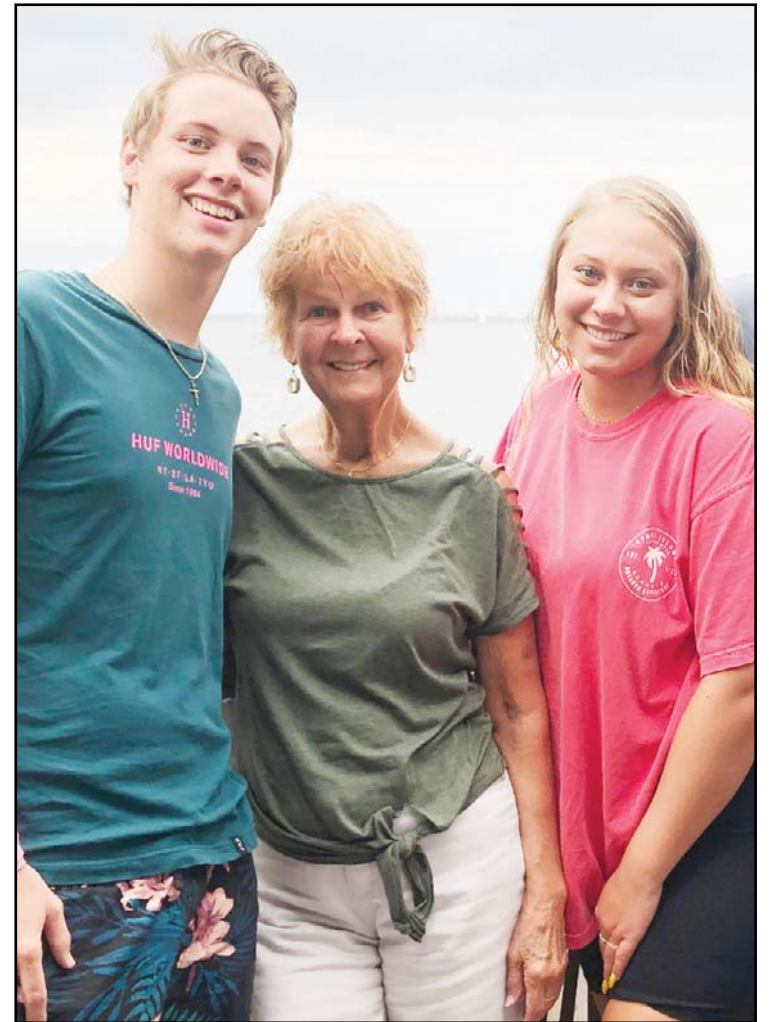
The health workers and families are facing much greater risks than the reporters. But the team still has to keep safe.

The first sign of Ebola is often a fever, so they take their temperature twice a day.

They have repeatedly practiced getting in and out of full-body protective gear. That is not needed today as the clinic has been designed to accommodate visitors; patients are kept apart in transparent-sided cubicles.



Left: In these undated photos made available by Wade J. Fleming, the leg of his mother Lynn Fleming is seen shortly after she suffered a small cut while walking in Coquina Beach near Bradenton, Fla. Fleming was later diagnosed with flesh-eating disease and died days later. (Right): Lynn Fleming is seen with her grandchildren Jonathan and Jensen Fleming. (AP)



### Study sheds light on hormone-blocking therapy

## Dementia risk ups with prostate cancer therapy

Offers comfort by responding to human touch

NEW YORK, July 4, (RTRS): Prostate cancer patients who received hormone-lowering therapy were at higher risk of developing dementia and Alzheimer's disease later on than men who didn't get this treatment, a large US study finds.

Researchers who followed nearly 155,000 men with prostate cancer found that overall, those given so-called androgen-deprivation therapy were at a 20% higher risk of being diagnosed with dementia and at 14% higher risk of an Alzheimer's diagnosis in the next 10 years. The risk continued to rise with increasing doses of androgen-deprivation drugs.

The results suggest that in cases where the prostate cancer is localized, androgen-deprivation therapy may not be a good choice, said the study's lead author, Ravishankar Jayadevappa, a research associate professor in the department of medicine at the University of Pennsylvania's Perelman School of Medicine in Philadelphia.

Even in patients at high risk, there needs to be a discussion about the elevated risk of dementia and Alzheimer's disease during long-term follow-up, Jayadevappa said.

### Shrinkage

The most common androgens found in the male body are testosterone and dihydrotestosterone (DHT). According to the American Cancer Society, doctors may choose to prescribe androgen-lowering therapy because it can result in slower growth - or even shrinkage - of prostate tumors.

Studies on the cognitive impacts of androgen-deprivation therapy have had mixed results, Jayadevappa and his colleagues note in JAMA Network Open.

In an attempt to arrive at a more definitive result, the researchers pored over data from a National Cancer Institute database that collects information on cancer incidence, treatment and mortality from 18 sites, encompassing 28% of the US population, and links it with Medicare data.

The researchers focused on men who

## 'Man's best friend' is robot dog to some with Alz's

THOUSAND OAKS, Calif, July 4, (RTRS): A robot dog under development in California is vying to be a best friend to people with Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia, offering comfort by responding to human touch with lifelike motions.

Entrepreneur Tom Stevens recently presented a test version of the robotic yellow Labrador puppy to residents of a nursing home in Thousand Oaks, California.

Stevens said his company Tombot, in the northern Los Angeles suburb of Santa Clarita, partnered with Jim Henson's Creature Shop, a firm founded by the late Muppets creator, to give the robot realistic movements.

"It didn't just have to look real and feel realistic but it had to behave realistically as well," Stevens said.

Stevens believes the Tombot dog, which moves its head from side to side, grunts and wags its tail, is lifelike enough to help people with dementia. It also is easier to look after than a real dog, he said.

The robot has 16 motors to control its movements and is loaded with sensors to respond to voice commands and detect how people

are touching it, such as the difference between a slow caress and a vigorous pet.

Stevens said he came up with the concept for the robot after his mother was diagnosed with Alzheimer's in 2011.

"Of the many bad days that we had early on, by far the worst was when I had to take away her dog," Stevens said. His mother had "a beautiful two-year-old Goldendoodle" but Stevens said the dog ended up being aggressive towards her caregiver.

Japan's Sony Corp pioneered the use of robot dogs in 1999 with the AIBO, billed as a pet that behaves like a real dog using artificial intelligence.

Unlike the AIBO, which looks robotic, the Tombots closely resemble real dogs.

Stevens had a background in investing in robotics and he wondered whether the technology could help in providing companionship to people like his mother.

His test version has the name "Jenny." The puppy cannot walk and is carried on a small bed.

At the Sage Mountain nursing home in Thousand Oaks, where

many residents suffer from dementia and other memory-related illnesses, petting the robot put smiles on people's faces during a visit last month.

Jenny has stopped by the facility a number of times.

"The dog is very interactive, the tail wagging, responding to them calling her name," said Caroline Gibson, a spokeswoman for the nursing home. "It's really amazing to watch them have a lot of ease and reduce anxiety."

Tombot plans to have its first commercial deliveries of its robot dogs in 2020.

### Also:

**NEW YORK:** GlaxoSmithKline said its specialist HIV company had received marketing authorization from the European Commission for its drug to treat advanced stage HIV infections in adults and adolescents above the age of 12 and weighing at least 40 kg.

ViiV Healthcare, which is majority owned by GSK and with Pfizer Inc and Shionogi Ltd as shareholders, got the US Food and Drug Administration approval for the treatment Dovato in April.

(androgen-deprivation therapy), including many long-term side effects," said Marshall, an assistant professor at the Sidney Kimmel Comprehensive Cancer Center at Johns Hopkins in Baltimore, Maryland. "While this question of a link between ADT and Alzheimer's disease and dementia has been explored before, this is quite possibly the largest study to address this issue. Because of that, it adds important information about the risk of Alzheimer's disease and dementia for men being treated."

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