

Eating Broccoli Could Prevent The Most Common Form of Arthritis

Source: The Independent

A new study has found that eating broccoli could help prevent or slow the most common form of arthritis.

Researchers found that sulforaphane - a compound usually found in broccoli but also in sprouts and cabbage - slows down the destruction of cartilage in joints associated with osteoarthritis, a degenerative disease affecting the hands, feet, spine, hips and knees.

The study, funded by medical research charity Arthritis Research UK, the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council's Diet and Health Research Industry Club and The Dunhill Medical Trust, was conducted by a team of researchers at University of East Anglia .

Ian Clark, professor of musculoskeletal biology said: "The results from this study are very promising.

"We have shown that this works in the three laboratory models we have tried, in cartilage cells, tissue and mice.

"We now want to show this works in humans. It would be very powerful if we could.

"As well as treating those who already have the condition, you need to be able to tell healthy people how to protect their joints into the future."

More than 8.5 million people in the UK have osteoarthritis, and the NHS performs over 140,000 hip and knee replacement surgeries annually across England and Wales. It most commonly affects people over the age of 50 and is more prevalent in women than men. There is currently no cure.

Aging and obesity are the most common contributors to the painful and often debilitating condition and it is predicted the number of people seeking treatment will rise sharply by 2035.

Alan Silman, Arthritis Research UK's medical director, said: "This is an interesting study with promising results as it suggests that a common vegetable, broccoli, might have health benefits for people with osteoarthritis and even possibly protect people from developing the disease in the first place.

"Until now research has failed to show that food or diet can play any part in reducing the progression of osteoarthritis, so if these findings can be replicated in humans, it would be quite a breakthrough.

“We know that exercise and keeping to a healthy weight can improve people's symptoms and reduce the chances of the disease progressing, but this adds another layer in our understanding of how diet could play its part.”

As a vegetable, broccoli is also rich in dietary fiber, minerals, and anti-oxidants and is high in vitamin C and A.

Previous research has suggested that sulforaphane has anti-cancer and anti-inflammatory properties, but this is the first major study into its effects on joint health.