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Oct. 24, 2004, 7:55PM

More proof that an apple keeps the doctor away

By **WILLIAM HATHAWAY**
Hartford Courant

French scientists have found more evidence Mom was right -- this time about eating apples.

Apples may keep colon cancer at bay because they contain antioxidant properties that seem to protect mice from developing pre-cancerous lesions, according to research presented last week at the American Association for Cancer Research's third annual International Conference of Frontiers of Cancer Prevention Research meeting in Seattle.

Researchers wanted to study the role of polyphenols, or naturally occurring antioxidants found in the skin of apples and in other kinds of foods. Specifically, the scientists wanted to compare the cancer prevention effects of two types of polyphenols called flavonoids and procyanidins.

When they exposed cancer cells from mice to flavonoids, the researchers noticed little effect on cancer-cell growth. However, exposing cancer cells to procyanidins triggered apoptosis, or cellular suicide, which is crucial to preventing the spread of cancer.

"For now, our work suggests that eating the whole apple, including the skin, might offer some anti-cancer benefits," said Dr. Francis Raul, research director of the French National Institute for Health and Medical Research and the study's lead investigator. "That is something we can comfortably do without further study."



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