

P.R. research: Vitamins may reduce cancer risk

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Vitamin and calcium supplements may help to keep breast cancer at bay, according to new study by researchers at the Ponce School of Medicine.

The supplements are thought to help cells repair damaged DNA using a process that involves more than 200 proteins.

“It is not an immediate effect. You don’t take a vitamin today and your breast cancer risk is reduced tomorrow. However, we did see a long-term effect in terms of breast cancer reduction,” said Professor Jaime Matta, from the Ponce School of Medicine.

“This process involves at least five separate pathways and is critical for maintaining genomic stability. When the DNA is not repaired, it leads to mutation that leads to cancer.”

The study included 268 women with breast cancer and 457 healthy controls. Women were more likely to have breast cancer if they were older, had a family history of breast cancer, had no history of breastfeeding and had lower DNA repair capacity.

Vitamin supplements appeared to reduce the risk of breast cancer by about 30%. Calcium supplements reduced the risk of breast cancer by 40%. After controlling for the level of DNA repair capacity, calcium supplements were no longer as protective, but the link between vitamin supplements and breast cancer reduction remained.

“We’re not talking about mega doses of these vitamins and calcium supplements, so this is definitely one way to reduce risk,” said Matta.

The findings were presented at the American Association for Cancer Research annual meeting in Washington D.C.