Timing of Dinner May Affect Breast and Prostate Cancer Risk

A new International Journal of Cancer study reveals that eating an early supper and having a long interval between the last meal and sleep are associated with lower breast and prostate cancer risks.

The study included 621 cases of prostate and 1205 of breast cancer with 872 male and 1321 female population controls. Participants were interviewed on timing of meals and sleep, and they completed a Food Frequency Questionnaire.

Compared with individuals sleeping immediately after supper, those sleeping 2 or more hours after supper had a 20% reduction in cancer risk for breast and prostate cancer combined and in each cancer individually. A similar protection was observed in individuals having supper before 9pm compared with supper after 10pm.

The findings stress the importance of evaluating the body’s internal clock—or circadian rhythms—in studies on diet and cancer, and the need to develop dietary recommendations for cancer prevention that focus not only on type and quantity of food intake.

“If the findings are confirmed, they will have implications for cancer prevention recommendations that currently do not take meal timing into account” said lead author Dr. Manolis Kogevinas, of ISGlobal, in Barcelona. “The impact could be especially important in cultures such as those of southern Europe where people tend to have supper late.”

Additional Information


About Journal

The International Journal of Cancer (IJC) is the official journal of the Union for International Cancer Control—UICC; it appears twice a month. IJC invites submission of manuscripts under a broad scope of topics relevant to experimental and clinical cancer research and publishes original Research Articles and Short Reports under the following categories:

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