

OIL CAN HELP MINIMISE CANCER RISKS

In the past few decades, cancer has fast become a dreaded disease that threatens human lives. However, a number of treatment approaches to prevent it at an early stage are also gaining steam.

One of the preventive approaches, which has been tested in many cancer models, is through the use of palm-based Vitamin E tocotrienols.

There are two forms of vitamin E — tocotrienols and tocopherols. They exist naturally in some vegetables.

Palm oil is a rich source of tocotrienols and tocopherols — 70 per cent of the vitamin E in palm oil is tocotrienols while the remaining 30 per cent is tocopherols.

In addition to vitamin E, palm oil is also rich in other phytonutrients.

International Medical University Malaysia (IMU) immunologist, Professor Ammu K. Radhakrishnan, said numerous joint research on the benefits of palm tocotrienols in cancer prevention carried out by the university in the past 15 years have yielded encouraging results.

“We have carried out research and development on the palm oil-based



» International Medical University Malaysia immunologist Professor Ammu K. Radhakrishnan says palm oil is a rich source of tocotrienols, which can help boost the immune system and minimise risks of chronic cancer, Parkinson's disease and diabetes. Pix by Zulfadhli Zulkifli

tocotrienols in the past 15 years and our studies have revealed that palm tocotrienols could reduce cancer activities.

“Palm tocotrienols have anti-cancer properties and we are currently looking at how this vitamin is beneficial to our health, boost our natural defense system and fight infections, as well as its response during the healing process,” said Ammu.

She added that scientists are looking at how tocotrienols stimulate the immune system to fight cancer as they are more potent than tocopherols and appear to be an adjuvant that can boost the immune system and keep the balance.

Ammu said there is a misconception that cancer comes from external sources when, in fact, it starts when one's body cells fail to regulate growth and become abnormal or “rogue”.

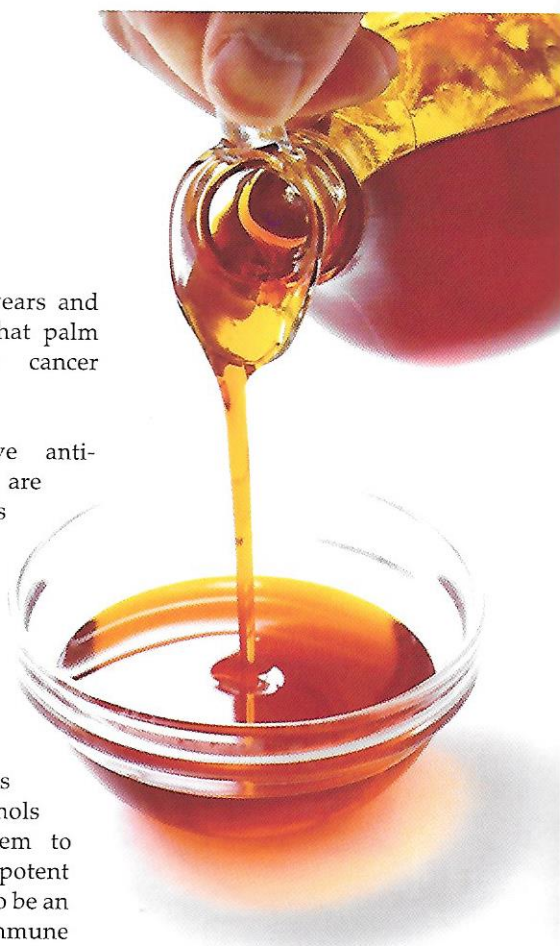
Cancer cells also require nutrients and other substances to grow and sustain their growth. For this, the cells will secrete chemicals that promote new blood vessels.

Palm tocotrienols have been found to inhibit the growth of new blood vessels, and this may be one of the mechanisms used to fight cancer.

According to Ammu, several studies using experimental models involving laboratory mice have been carried out to test the effectiveness of palm-based tocotrienols for anti-cancer and immune-enhancing effects.

The studies have shown that palm-based tocotrienols have promising anti-cancer and immune-enhancing effects.

A clinical trial conducted in 2011, which involved 120 healthy subjects, showed that palm-based vitamin E was also effective in boosting



immune response to a vaccine.

In addition to anti-cancer and immune-enhancing effects, tocotrienols have other beneficial health effects such as anti-diabetic, cardioprotection, hypocholesterolemic, anti-oxidant, neuroprotective and anti-inflammatory.

Ammu said palm oil is a rich source of tocotrienols that have many benefits such as boosting the immune system and minimising risks of chronic cancer, Parkinson's disease and diabetes.

She, however, advises the public not to only look at the treatment options for cancer but also focus on its prevention, such as staying healthy by eating a balanced diet and doing a regular exercise.

According to Ammu, palm oil is fast gaining traction in the fight against cancer.

“The research is still ongoing and we have to see how to disseminate all these beneficial findings to the public,” she added.

Source: New Straits Time