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By Fred Searle

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## Organics shown to lower cancer risk

Cancer diagnosis is 25 per cent lower among organic consumers, according to research led by the Sorbonne University in Paris



**E**ating organic food can significantly lower your risk of getting cancer, a new study led by the Sorbonne has revealed.

Researchers from the Parisian university monitored the diet and health of nearly 70,000 people for five years, allowing confounding variables to be factored out since organic consumers also tend to have healthier lifestyles.

Joanna Lewis, director of policy at the Soil Association, said: "Healthier diets and organic food should be a right for all, not a privilege for the few. The strongest evidence for reducing cancer risk is associated with adopting a healthier diet: increasing fruit and veg consumption and cutting consumption of processed meat, refined carbohydrates and sugar.

"However, this study suggests that reducing exposure to pesticides by making organic food more widely available should be given greater attention in cancer prevention."

She added: "The Soil Association's *Food for Life* programme is normalising healthier menus and organic food for all, changing menus in more than half of primary schools in England, including in the most disadvantaged communities like Tower Hamlets and Oldham.

"Organic sales are up in the UK (and across Europe and US) and more and more shops, cafes and restaurant chains are offering a good range of organic."

The study found 25 per cent lower rates of cancer diagnosis among those that consume the most organic food. The difference remained significant when the typically healthier lifestyles of organic consumers were taken into consideration in the statistical analyses.

When rates of individual cancers were assessed, researchers detected significantly lower rates among organic consumers for postmenopausal breast cancer, Non-Hodgkin lymphoma and all other lymphomas.

The authors describe the lower exposure to pesticides that have been classified as "probably carcinogenic" by the WHO's International Agency of Research on Cancer (IARC) as the most likely explanation for the lower cancer rates among organic food consumers.

Commenting on the study, nutrition experts from the Harvard TH Chan School of Public Health concluded: "More research in this area is urgently needed because cancer is a serious public health challenge and foods containing pesticide residues are widely consumed.

"If future studies provide more solid evidence supporting the consumption of organic foods for cancer prevention, measures to lower costs and ensure equitable access to organic products will be crucial."

The study's authors said that although the findings needed to be confirmed, "promoting organic food consumption in the general population could be a promising preventative strategy against cancer".

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