



food matters

with Consultant Nutritionist Sue Radd

those organic foods

Eating organic foods may be the best way to lower your risk of heart attack, stroke and colorectal cancer, according to a recent Scottish study.

Eleven organic vegetable soups from the super-market were compared to two non-organic, home-made soups and 22 non-organic varieties from the same store.

Salicylic acid—an important natural phytochemical—was found in virtually all the soups, but the organic soups contained six times the average level!

what does salicylic acid do in the body?

Salicylic acid is the anti-inflammatory substance you get from taking aspirin. Aspirin has been used clinically for more than 100 years to lower the risk of heart attack, stroke and colorectal cancer risk. Inflammation is a common process underlying many diseases.

The scientists came up with the idea underlying the study, because plants grown organically aren't protected by pesticides and would have to have other ways to guard themselves from disease. Salicylic acid is a natural protectant produced in plants as a defence against stress and disease.

vegetarians have higher levels

Another study by the same group of researchers confirmed that people who eat more fruits and vegetables of any type (organic or non-organic) have higher levels of salicylic acid in the body. Vegetarians had higher levels than non-vegetarians. Interestingly, there was an overlap between levels of salicylic acid found in some vegetarians and people taking low-dose aspirin.

Salicylic acid is found naturally in fruits and vegetables, particularly in herbs and spices. I particularly enjoy drinking it in fresh peppermint tea! Eating more fruits and vegetables in general is definitely the way to go. Organic may be even better.

See **page 25** for a delicious vegetable recipe.