

A comparison of the anticancer activities of dietary beta-carotene, canthaxanthin and astaxanthin in mice in vivo.

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The anticancer activities of beta-carotene, astaxanthin and canthaxanthin against the growth of mammary tumors were studied in female eight-wk-old BALB/c mice. The mice were fed a synthetic diet containing 0, 0.1 or 0.4% beta-carotene, astaxanthin or canthaxanthin. After 3 weeks, all mice were inoculated with 1 x 10⁶ WAZ-2T tumor cells into the mammary fat pad. All animals were killed on 45 d after inoculation with the tumor cells. No carotenoids were detectable in the plasma or tumor tissues of unsupplemented mice. Concentrations of plasma astaxanthin (20 to 28 μmol/L) were greater ($P < 0.05$) than that of beta-carotene (0.1 to 0.2 μmol/L) and canthaxanthin (3 to 6 nmol/L). However, in tumor tissues, the concentration of canthaxanthin (4.9 to 6.0 nmol/g) was higher than that of beta-carotene (0.2 to 0.5 nmol/g) and astaxanthin (1.2 to 2.7 nmol/g). In general, all three carotenoids decreased mammary tumor volume. Mammary tumor growth inhibition by astaxanthin was dose-dependent and was higher than that of canthaxanthin and beta-carotene. Mice fed 0.4% beta-carotene or canthaxanthin did not show further increases in tumor growth inhibition compared to those fed 0.1% of each carotenoid. Lipid peroxidation activity in tumors was lower ($P < 0.05$) in mice fed 0.4% astaxanthin, but not in those fed beta-carotene and canthaxanthin. **Therefore, beta-carotene, canthaxanthin and especially astaxanthin inhibit the growth of mammary tumors in mice; their anti-tumor activity is also influenced by the supplemental dose. (Note: All three of these carotenoids are naturally present in BioAstin Natural Astaxanthin as they occur in Haematococcus Algae from which BioAstin is produced.)**

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