

## Tomato Products & Sun Protection

### *Fast Facts*

- Ultraviolet (UV) radiation is one of the most abundant and threatening carcinogens in our environment.
- Each year, more than one million cases of skin cancer are diagnosed.
- According to the Center for Disease Control, one in five Americans will be diagnosed with skin cancer in their lifetime.
- Scientists are increasingly worried that ozone depletion and climate change will only increase the public's risk of UV exposure.
- Scientific research is mounting linking some natural compounds found in plants to protecting people against damage caused by UV radiation through the consumption of foods rich in carotenoids and flavonoids.
- Carotenoids and flavonoids, both found in tomato products, play a role in protecting plants against excess light, and this protection may be conferred to people when they eat foods containing them.
- Tomato products are high in carotenoids, lycopene and beta-carotene, which are potent antioxidants capable of scavenging singlet molecular oxygen and peroxy radicals caused by photo-oxidation. Researchers reported in a 2007 issue of the journal, *Molecular Biotechnology*, that such dietary micronutrients may help life-long protection against UV radiation.
- Scientists from the Biomedical Research Center in Scotland say that plant compounds protect against UV damage, because they work as antioxidants, anti-inflammatory agents and immunomodulatory agents.
- Published in 2001 in the *Journal of Nutrition*, German Scientist found that the consumption of dietary tomato paste protects against UV-light induced erythema (redness of skin caused by inflammation, such as from sunburn).
- Processing tomatoes are heat treated and used in tomato products, including tomato paste, diced and whole canned tomatoes, tomato sauces, tomato juice, tomato soup, salsas and ketchup.
- Not only are tomato products one of the most affordable and healthy foods, they are the number one source of the powerful antioxidant, lycopene.