



## Cancer and nutrition

Despite prevention and treatment, cancer continues to progress in Europe, partly due to the aging population, but also to our lifestyle

### OBJECTIVE

**EPIC**, launched in 1993 and still running today, aims to study the link between diet and the development of cancer and other chronic diseases.

As the leading cause of death world-wide, cancer can however be avoided as, according to UICC (Union Internationale Contre le Cancer - International Union against Cancer), 40% of cancers are linked to our sedentary lifestyle and to our diet. According to EPIC's estimates, this figure could be as high as 70% for colorectal cancer, for example.

### A prestigious study and significant results

The EPIC study is particularly important and wide-reaching, because of the large quantity of comparative data involved (panel of 478,040 men and women), the type of data taken into consideration (hereditary and socio-demographic factors, biological samples), the long test period (5 years on average since 1992) and the number of countries (10) and of researchers involved. This major project allows us to establish a link between diet and certain types of cancer, such as colo-

rectal cancer, that are closely linked to high intakes of red meat, offal and pork products (charcuterie) but can be reduced by eating more fish.

### The Mediterranean diet: confirmation of the benefits

Results from the EPIC study confirm the positive impact of the Mediterranean diet, in terms of death rates and cardio-vascular diseases. They show that this diet can reduce the risk of cancer (specifically breast and colorectal cancers). The mechanisms linking the risk of cancer and consumption of pork products are not clearly understood and we still do not know why eating fish protects the body from cancer, apart from *in vitro* studies on animals which indicate that long-chain fatty acids – characteristically found in fish oil – could inhibit carcinogenesis.

### A solid and transversal partnership

EPIC has demonstrated the importance of undertaking further studies using a large sample of people, as well as the need for solid partnerships and a centralized organization.

*(No final visa from the coordinator on the text)*



*The consumption of fish may reduce the risk of cancer.*



*Results from the EPIC study confirm the positive impact of the Mediterranean diet.*

THE PARTNERS IN THE PROJECT European Prospective Investigation into Cancer and nutrition (EPIC) - since 1993: IARC, Lyon (France) ; Imperial College, London (UK) and 22 research centres in 10 countries