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The Mediterranean Miracle: Tomato Sauce

By Mehmet C. Oz, M.D. and Michael F. Roizen, M.D.

Everyone's looking for the next miracle cure, but who would think you could find it on the shelf of your grocery store? Tomato sauce, it turns out, has an incredible range of health benefits. It has lycopene, which is a very potent antioxidant. Also—and we don't know why this is—**ten tablespoons of tomato sauce a week decreases your risk of prostate cancer by about 40 percent.** In addition, it's one of the strongest agents we know of to keep your arteries young. It works by reducing the size of cholesterol plaques in your blood vessels, which helps prevent clots and blockages. People who eat those ten tablespoons a week have blood pressure that is lower by 8 over 5 mmHg. Remember, the average American's blood pressure is 130 over 85, and ideal is 115 over 75, so that's a substantial step in the right direction, just from tomato sauce. Here's a recipe for a basic, delicious tomato sauce from Mario Batali's *Simple Italian Food* (Clarkson Potter, \$32):

In a three-quart saucepan, heat 1/4 cup olive oil over medium heat. Add 1 Spanish onion, chopped, and 4 garlic cloves, peeled and thinly sliced, and cook for 8 to 10 minutes. Add 1 tbsp dried thyme and half a shredded carrot and cook 5 minutes more. Add two 28-ounce cans whole tomatoes, crushed by hand and with juices, and bring to a boil, stirring often. Lower heat and simmer for 30 minutes, until thick as hot cereal. Season with salt to taste. Makes 4 cups, or 64 tbsp, and will hold for up to six months in the freezer.

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