

Findings due on diet links with cancer

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Thousands of Norfolk people have played a vital part in helping understand the links between diet and cancer, scientists said last night.

The findings from a study carried out across the county, as part of a Europe-wide research programme, will be unveiled to 1,000 people at a public meeting in Norwich today.

More than 30,000 men and women, aged between 40 and 79, have taken part in EPIC - the European Prospective Investigation into Cancer and Nutrition.

Its findings, which have been widely published since 2001, have helped to explain how chronic diseases are linked to diet and lifestyle.

They include demonstrating that a increasing the amount of dietary fibre and lowering the amount of red meat we consume can reduce the risk of developing bowel cancer.

Today many of those who took part in the study will attend public meetings at

St Andrew's Hall, in Norwich.

Dr Nick Wareham from the Medical Research Council, one of the lead scientists

on the project, said: "This meeting is an opportunity for us to meet with and thank some of those taking part, to feed back some initial results of this unique long-term study and to announce our future plans.

"The participants of EPIC-Norfolk have made

major contributions to our understanding of what we can do to maintain health and prevent chronic diseases like cancer, heart disease and strokes."

Dr Sheila Bingham, another leading scientist involved with the project, said: "The results on diet and cancer were quite ground-breaking, we published them some time ago. The purpose of the meeting is to tell people what's been the upshot of all their hard work."

People will now be asked to take part in further studies into issues such as vision in older people and bone diseases.

Data will be monitored by a 30-strong team of researchers, most of whom are based at Norwich Community Hospital.

People taking part in the EPIC study, which was launched in 1992, have provided information on their diet and the amount of exercise they take, as well as having check-ups. Up to half a million people, in 10 countries across Europe, have taken part.

Norfolk was chosen for the UK's contribution because very few people over 40 move out of the county, making it easier to keep track of participants.

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