**Fruit and veg diet good for lungs of former smokers as well as the heart**

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EATING lots of fruit and vegies is not just good for the heart but also the lungs, especially those of former smokers.

New research has found a diet rich in fruit and veg has been linked to a much lower risk of developing chronic ­obstructive lung disease (COPD) — a condition that ­affects up to one in five Australians over the age of 40.

A study published in journal Thorax found each extra daily serving of fruit or vegetables was associated with a 4-8 per cent reduction in risk of COPD among former and current smokers.

Smoking is the leading cause of COPD and the World Health Organisation predicts the lung disease is set to ­become the third leading cause of death worldwide.

To try to find out if fruit and vegetable intake might have a dietary role in treatment, Polish researchers tracked the respiratory health of more than 44,000 men aged between 45 and 79 for 13 years up to the end of 2012.

Almost two-thirds had smoked at some point; while around one in four were current smokers.

During the monitoring period, 1918 new cases of COPD were diagnosed. In all, those eating five or more daily servings were 35 per cent less likely to develop lung disease than those eating two or fewer daily servings.

Each extra serving was associated with a 4 per cent lower risk of COPD in former smokers and an 8 per cent lower risk in smokers.

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