

# **The Facts about Processed Tomatoes**

## **Response to CSPI Report**

**SACRAMENTO, Calif. (October 8, 2009)** -- The Tomato Products Wellness Council states unequivocally that a recent report by the CSPI listing tomatoes as a risky food is misleading and may cause unnecessary alarm for consumers.

The report was referring to fresh tomatoes which differ from processed tomatoes. Processing tomatoes are picked fresh and then heat-treated at 160 degrees or more for use in tomato products, including tomato paste, diced and whole canned tomatoes, tomato sauces, tomato juice, tomato soup, salsas, and ketchup. This not only guarantees their optimal flavor and safety from Salmonella and other food-borne pathogens, but the heating process also provides an enhanced value of lycopene, an antioxidant that helps fight disease. In fact, the Food and Drug Administration is on record confirming the safety of processed tomatoes from commercial food processing facilities because of the heat treatment.

"Salmonella and other pathogens are killed at 145 degrees," said Britt Burton Freeman, Ph.D., at the National Center for Food Safety & Technology at Illinois Institute of Technology. "Since tomato products are heat processed at temperatures well above that, consumers can feel confident about continuing to use them.

Because they are heat processed, tomato products are one of the safest, healthiest, most affordable and versatile foods in your kitchen. These preserved tomatoes can be enjoyed all year long and are the number one source of lycopene in the American diet. Eating more tomato products everyday can protect your body against cardiovascular disease, various forms of cancer, inflammation and other conditions.

**For more information about processed tomatoes, visit:**  
[www.tomatowellness.com](http://www.tomatowellness.com)