New scientific research from the University of Southampton has revealed that a plant compound in watercress may have the ability to suppress breast cancer cell development by 'turning off' a signal in the body and thereby starving the growing tumour of essential blood and oxygen.

As tumours develop they rapidly outgrow their existing blood supply so they send out signals which make surrounding normal tissues grow new blood vessels into the tumour which feed them oxygen and nutrients.

The research, led by Professor Graham Packham of the University of Southampton, shows that the plant compound (called phenylethyl isothiocyanate) found in watercress can block this process, by interfering with and 'turning off' in the function of a protein called Hypoxia Inducible Factor (HIF).

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