



Nature's Answer to Cancer

Release your inner healing, naturally!



KIM DALZELL
Ph.D., R.D., L.D.
Author of "Challenge
Cancer and Win!"

What's Good to Eat Now That I *Can* Eat?

Support for People with Oral, Head and Neck Cancer Newsletter, Nov 2004

It's no secret that a poor nutritional status may diminish the quality and quantity of life for cancer patients, robbing them of the building blocks needed to regenerate healthy cells and physically recover from the sometimes debilitating effects of cancer treatment. This can be especially true for individuals who are diagnosed with and treated for oral, head and neck cancers. That's why, early on in the treatment plan, physicians, physical therapists, and nutritionists should work together with patients and caregivers to manage eating challenges brought about by conventional treatment side effects and physical or metabolic changes. Timely nutritional intervention makes it possible for many oral, head and neck patients to maintain their nutritional status through treatment. But then what?

While cancer patients must always keep in mind the end goal of obtaining adequate calories and protein, they should also consider using nutrition as a way to challenge cancer and optimize their health. Scientists have discovered that many common foods like tea, citrus fruits and soy beans, contain plant chemicals—called phytochemicals—that may boost immunity, protect healthy cells, and potentially reduce the risk of cancer metastasis or recurrence. Foods that may specifically benefit oral, head and neck cancer patients include:

Apples and Onions

Apples, white grapefruit and onions contain quercetin, a plant compound classified as a citrus bioflavonoid. Human and animal studies suggest that bioflavonoids may have anti-allergy, anti-inflammatory and anti-tumor activity. A study in Rome revealed that quercetin, along with the anti-estrogen tamoxifen, was able to inhibit growth and division of primary laryngeal squamous cell cancer and laryngeal carcinoma cell lines. Scientists also suggest that quercetin may reduce skin damage from radiation in patients with head and neck cancers. Patients may opt to eat raw apples or onions, or chose easy-to-swallow whole plant alternatives like applesauce and grapefruit sections. Additionally, onion powder can be sprinkled liberally to season meats, soups and casseroles. Health food stores also carry dietary supplements containing quercetin. The recommended dose is 200 to 400 mg per day under the supervision of a qualified healthcare provider.

Cranberries

Cranberries are an excellent dietary source of proanthocyanidins, which are powerful water-soluble antioxidants that have been found to support heart health and protect against macular degeneration and cataracts. A recent University of California study found that cranberry extract blocked the growth and reproduction of two oral cancer cell lines in test tubes. Grape seed extract has also demonstrated cytotoxic activity toward human breast, lung, and stomach cancer cells. Other foods rich in proanthocyanidins include blueberries, blackberries, cherries, plums, raspberries, red grapes, and strawberries. Cancer patients may want to substitute regular morning orange juice with 100% cranberry juice blends (no additional sugar added) or toss a mixture of thawed out frozen berries into a bowl with low fat, plain yogurt for an eye-appealing, between-meal-snack.



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Curry

The name "curry" is used to describe any food dish—from chicken to rice—that is made with a pureed mixture of onions, garlic, ginger, turmeric and coriander. Turmeric contains the plant chemical curcumin, which may protect cells from chromosomal damage. There are a large number of studies demonstrating the anti-cancer benefits of curcumin. A small human study in India revealed that individuals at risk for developing cancer of the palate due to reverse smoking who took one gram of turmeric per day had fewer precancerous lesions. Additionally, researchers in California found that curcumin could stop the growth and promoted apoptosis (cellular death) in head and neck squamous cancer cells. Curried foods are served at Indian restaurants and curry recipes can be found in a variety of cookbooks. Curcumin is also available as a natural dietary supplement. The suggested dose is 200 to 400 mg daily under the supervision of a qualified healthcare professional.

Green Tea

Catechins are polyphenolic compounds derived from tea. These compounds have a wide range of biological activities, including the potential to prevent oral cancer. Human, animal and test tube studies suggest that catechins may inhibit the activation of cancer-causing agents and have demonstrated anti-inflammatory, probiotic, and anti-microbial properties. Green tea contains more health-promoting compounds than black tea. But even if cancer patients aren't tea drinkers, there is good news! Researchers noted during a clinical trial at The State University of New Jersey that subjects experienced high concentrations of catechins in their saliva without drinking the tea. They simply held the tea leaves or brewed tea in their mouths for 2-5 minutes and then rinsed thoroughly. Green tea is also available as a dietary supplement. The suggested daily dose is 300 to 400 mg of standardized extract under the supervision of a qualified healthcare professional. For cancer patients who prefer to chew catechins, they should eat more berries, grapes, peaches, persimmons, plums and strawberries—all good sources of polyphenols.

Soy

Diadzein and genistein are two weak plant estrogens (isoflavones) found in soybeans. They have the most active blocking potential against estrogen receptors in the breast and ovaries, but also have demonstrated anti-cancer activity in several other cancer cell lines. Researchers have found that these isoflavones may enhance immunity by activating human natural killer cells. Genistein may also be effective in controlling the growth rate and metastatic properties of oral squamous cell carcinoma in laboratory animals. Soybeans are extremely versatile and have been made into a variety of foods. Patients may top cereal with soy milk (choose the lite version if fat intake is a concern) or blenderize silken tofu with low-fat yogurt and fresh fruit to make a delicious smoothie. Soy dietary supplements are also available, but there may be questionable risk associated with higher intakes of purified isoflavones, so it makes sense to choose soy foods, like tofu, soy beans, soy milk, etc., as a primary source of this cancer-fighting chemical.

Every day, research from around the world demonstrates the powerful healing potential of plants. All cancer patients should be encouraged to view foods as more than calories or protein. Rather, they should be educated and empowered with the knowledge that chemicals found in common foods may provide a substantial link to better health and cancer recovery.

Kim Dalzell, PhD, RD, LD, is an oncology nutrition expert and award-winning author who motivates us to "chews" wisely for optimal health. To book her for a speaking engagement, please visit www.naturesanswertocancer.com.



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Eat Right...No, Really!

Breast Cancer Wellness Magazine, Fall 2006

If I hear one more cancer patient say, "all my doctor told me about nutrition was to eat right", I just may end up crouched in a corner somewhere indulging in chunks of mind-calming chocolate. As a seasoned oncology nutritionist who has worked with cancer survivors from all over the world, I get so frustrated when I hear this statement. What most doctors don't understand is that telling someone to 'eat right' is analogous to telling them to 'be careful'. The words drip of loving concern, but they lack the substance required for real, meaningful action—cancer-fighting action. After all, who knows what 'eating right' means anyway? The reality is that everyone knows how to eat, but everyone doesn't know how to eat right.

And that's a problem for those of you faced with a diagnosis of cancer. Vague instructions to eat right do very little to empower you for self-healing. And, if left with little or no guidance, you may miss significant metabolic opportunities to change your growing environment and chase cancer away. That's right! Researchers agree that you can profoundly affect the cancer process if you change your cellular environment—something you can do with food and nutrients. When you look inside the cancer care toolbox, you'll discover that eating common foods can provide powerful and lasting effects for health and breast cancer recovery.

I won't sugarcoat it. There will be challenges. Contradictory nutrition research, confusing food labels and snazzy product marketing tactics can make it difficult to make wise food choices. But eating right to fight breast cancer goes way beyond choosing foods from a generic healthy food list. If you apply two of my important key concepts to healthy eating you will be empowered to make cancer fighting, immune supporting choices at every meal.

First, get specific. Switching to a diet low in fat or sugar is a good start, but why not power up your meals by selecting foods that contain nutrients proven to have anti-breast cancer activity? There are thousands of scientific studies that link specific foods or nutrients to breast cancer. Do you know which foods deter breast cancer cell growth? If you want to fight breast cancer head on, you need to select those dietary habits or specific foods on a regular basis.

For example, a recent study found that post-menopausal women with breast cancer who ate a flax-filled muffin every day during the study period significantly reduced the growth of their tumors and increased the rate of apoptosis, or cellular death, of their breast cancer cells. As it turns out, flax contains alpha linolenic acid, a known cancer fighter. Adding broccoli, cabbage or other cruciferous vegetables into your daily diet may help you naturally detoxify estrogen—the fuel for estrogen-sensitive breast cancers. Plant chemicals called indoles found in these cruciferous vegetables help drive the production of a non-toxic estrogen—a form of estrogen that doesn't spur on the growth of breast cancer cells.

Other studies reveal that if you are leaner (you know the drill...eat less, move more), you may increase your survival time because excess body weight is associated with increased recurrence rates. You'll want to consume smaller, more frequent meals and avoid overeating, which can lead to fat deposition and obesity.

These research-based practical dietary suggestions are just the tip of the iceberg lettuce (pardon my use of such a nutrient-poor vegetable!). There are many others. For maximum cancer fighting benefits, you must employ this powerful kitchen therapy—a form of chemotherapy without the side effects!

Second, apply the one-up rule to everything you eat. There are two ways to do this. If you replace a food with a healthier version of that food, you will be improving upon the overall health value of the meal. Using turkey burger in place of hamburger will help you cut fat in your diet. If you make one change to a particular food that increases the nutritional content of that food, you have just improved the health potential of that food. Adding nuts to a salad will increase your protein intake, for example. What's nice about this approach is that the pressure to eat perfectly is gone because the end goal is to simply change one food at a time within each meal.



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When you one-up, you are choosing manageable changes that can make a big difference in the long term. Here are more examples of how this works: take a standard bowl of oatmeal in the morning and instead of serving it plain, sprinkle on some crushed walnuts, a pinch of ground flax, and some dried apricots. You've just enhanced the nutritional value of that oatmeal by leaps and bounds—you get more fiber, vitamin C, and immune stimulating omega-3 fatty acids.

What about rethinking your greens at dinner? Make the change from iceberg lettuce to baby greens with shredded red cabbage and avocado slices and you've got a serious cancer fighting salad.

In one study, drinking just two cups of tea per day lowered risk of severe hardening of the arteries by 46%. Tea also contains chemicals that may stop new cancer cells from proliferating. You don't necessarily have to drink green tea either. The latest evidence indicates that black tea chemicals may be just as effective as those found in green tea. Keeping the bag in the water as you sip will increase the cancer-fighting chemical content too!

So, every time you eat just ask yourself, "What one change will make this meal healthier?" Many nutritionists call this concept nutrient density. I call it eating to get the most nutrition bang for your buck.

Moving from a diet of "what's in the takeout container tonight, honey?" toward a diet cooked from scratch doesn't happen overnight. The more you learn about healthy eating and apply what you know the sooner you will find yourself an evolved, enlightened cancer fighter!

There is a clear difference between eating and eating right. With the appropriate guidance, you have a chance to change the course of your cancer. Whether you decide to add a breast cancer fighting food to your breakfast or to one-up your favorite recipe, the important thing is to begin the process. It's your choice, but start today.

And if you happen to see me in a corner somewhere eating chocolate, come over and rescue me. Just tell me you are eating right, *really* right!

Kim Dalzell, PhD, RD, LD, is a board certified and nationally recognized oncology nutritionist, author and professional speaker who develops individualized, therapeutic nutrition programs for cancer patients. She is the author of *Challenge Cancer and Win!* a book that provides meal and vitamin plans based on specific cancer types. For more information, please visit www.naturesanswertocancer.com.



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From My Nutrition Journey to Yours

Breast Cancer Wellness Magazine, Winter 2006

Even before I finished my undergraduate degree in dietetics, I knew I wanted to make a difference in the world. Food—something we all love and need—was going to be my tool for helping others feel better, fight disease and live longer.

My nutrition career began in the oncology unit at a small community hospital in North Carolina. I wasn't happy with my floor assignment, because at the time I believed that I couldn't be of much help to cancer patients. You see, I saw cancer as a dreaded disease that meant debilitation and death. This would not be the first time in my career that I was wrong.

I pushed through my feelings of helplessness and did my best for every patient. I made sure a can of Ensure was placed on their meal trays, carefully charted their caloric intake and stocked the nursing floor pantry with plenty of ice cream. Unfortunately, I watched many of my patients waste away and suffer with terrible treatment side effects. And I was convinced that nutrition offered very little promise for people with cancer. I was wrong about that too.

After years of jumping from hospital to hospital (courtesy of my husband's job) I realized that traditional medicine alone was not going to offer individuals with cancer the optimal opportunities to really fight their disease and recover. I began reading about complementary medicine and was fortunate enough to secure a job at a national cancer treatment center that blended conventional treatment with mind, body and spiritual support, to include whole person nutritional therapy.

It only took one day on the job to realize that despite my years of traditional education and job experience, I was not prepared to address the concerns of this new breed of cancer patient. These empowered cancer fighters wanted to know about the best herbs for nausea and whether or not a detoxification diet was safe. They asked questions about plant chemicals in food and what kind of fish contained the least amount of mercury. Some of my patients knew more about nutrition than me! So I went back to school once more in a nontraditional setting to learn about Chinese Medicine, herbology and dietary supplementation. I scoured the National Library of Medicine files to find science-based information to share with my patients and I began to see how much of an impact nutrition could have on cancer outcome. My patients were not just surviving—they were thriving!

Unfortunately, the traditional dietetics mindset still reigns supreme in many cancer treatment centers today. Patients are told to eat whatever they want in order to keep from losing weight. They are not educated about immune-boosting foods or given natural therapy alternatives for treatment-induced side effects. Sadly, many cancer patients are not given every opportunity to succeed.

Regardless of where you are in your cancer recovery journey, a strong nutrition program can provide you with a powerful mechanism to heal, regenerate healthy cells, and be stronger. And you can feel "normal" again. The best nutrition program takes into account the whole person, not just the diagnosis. Cancer type and staging, laboratory values, medical history, current food habits, gastrointestinal tract function and prescription medication usage are just some of the things that need to be assessed when formulating a cancer-fighting nutrition plan.

As we follow three women on their journey, I will be educating and empowering them to achieve their healing potential through nutrition. They will learn about foods that are powerhouse supporters of their immune system. They will learn about chemicals or ingredients in foods that will either fight or fuel their cancer cells. They will learn how to make realistic alterations to their family's diet so they experience less resistance to the dietary changes. And they will learn that with every small step they take on the road to better nutrition, the closer they will be to the wellness state they desire.



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And for you, the readers, you too will grow stronger in your resolve to eat better. You will witness how these women harness the power of nature to get stronger. You will feel depressed when you learn of challenges that stifle success and you will celebrate as transformation unfolds. You will realize that as these women make changes, you can too. You will be inspired and motivated to begin your own nutritional journey. One step at a time. One food at a time. One day at a time. And then you'll join them, and me, as we continue on down the road toward nutritional enlightenment. Enjoy the journey!

By Kim Dalzell, PhD, RD, LD. Learn more about this national speaker, author and oncology nutritionist at www.naturesanswertocancer.com



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Low Carb for Cancer Patients?

Cancer Fighter Magazine, Spring 2004

Potatoes are poison and carbs will kill you. These ominous sound bites have millions of consumers convinced that eating carbohydrates will make them fat, tired and sick. Cancer patients are joining the carb craze, snacking on low-carb crackers and dining on bunless burgers, in the quest for wellness. As Shirley Johnson, a 65-year old Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma patient from New Berlin, Wisconsin explains, "I ate a low-carb grilled steak salad just the other day—not because I wanted to lose weight, but because it was made with spinach, red onions and black olives and it didn't come with bread. Hard white rolls are my weakness, so why tempt myself?"

No one would argue that sugar-laden desserts, candies and other refined starches like white bread and instant rice are poor nutritional choices. And in fact, eating fewer carbs may actually be good for you. Short-term research reveals a low carbohydrate, high protein diet can jumpstart weight loss and decrease unhealthy blood triglyceride levels. (1) Losing weight can pay off big for some cancer patients—studies suggest leaner women may have fewer treatment side effects and live longer than heavier women. (2,3) Also, rising blood sugar levels in response to refined carbohydrates may negatively impact immunity by impairing white blood cell activity. (4) White blood cells protect us by targeting and destroying foreign bodies, like cancer cells. Furthermore, there is an established link between processed sugars and an increased risk of a number of cancers. (5) These possible health hazards, plus the risks of diabetic complications and tooth decay, make the choice to avoid starches and sugars crystal clear.

If eating fewer carbohydrates is a healthy thing to do, then why are nutrition experts dismayed to see consumers push away carb-packed favorites like pasta and potatoes? As it turns out, rather than cutting simple carbs consumers are limiting the beneficial ones. There seems to be confusion over what makes a carbohydrate "good" or "bad". When complex carbohydrates like legumes, whole grains and starchy vegetables are digested, they are released more slowly into the bloodstream. Blood sugar levels stay in check. That is good. Simple carbohydrates like white sugar, flour and refined food products containing these ingredients, are release more quickly into the bloodstream causing a rapid rise in blood sugar levels. That is bad.

Some cancer patients, believing in the basic tenet that carbohydrates are toxic, feel they need to avoid *every* kind of carbohydrate, including fruits and cereals. This can be especially detrimental if undergoing chemotherapy or radiation. Losing weight too quickly by restricting food groups may impair immunity and elevate the risk for malnutrition—increasing the likelihood that cancer treatment may need to be delayed while the patient takes time to "rebuild". Limiting carbohydrate intake can also make it difficult to obtain the National Cancer Institute's recommended 25 to 30 grams of dietary fiber per day. Without adequate fiber from whole grains and fresh fruit and vegetables, bowel function may be compromised leading to constipation and a build-up of cancer-causing bile acids in the colon. Individuals who choose to eat low-carb products may also experience more digestive disturbances. Most low-carb products contain sugar alcohols like sorbitol, mannitol and xylitol. If consumed in large amounts, these alcohols may cause diarrhea. And although a new study found that low-carb dieters lost more weight than traditional dieters, the researchers pointed out that low-carb diets have high drop out rates. (7) If you don't stick to a diet, chances are you will revert back to your old eating patterns. Rather than blame carbs, consider that life-long unbalanced dietary and lifestyle practices just might be to blame for packing on the pounds and weakening the body's resistance to illness.

Ultimately, we just don't know if low-carb diets are safe in the long-term. We certainly have enough evidence to suggest that diets high in saturated fat and animal protein may raise the risk of many cancers and contribute to an unhealthy, inflamed state in the body—clogging arteries, impairing immunity and contributing to overall toxicity. Diets without plenty of fruits, vegetables and whole grains are lacking in health-promoting vitamins, minerals, fiber and



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Given these insights, it makes sense to rethink the carbohydrate connection to health. Rather than avoid all carbs, or totally convert to low-carb foods, you should take a sensible approach to eating.

The American Dietetic Association, whose mission is to educate the public about good nutrition practices, defines a healthy eating plan as one based on complex carbohydrates such as whole grains, fruits and vegetables, moderate in protein and relatively low in fat, coupled with daily physical activity. The National Academy of Science recommends that about half of your calories come from carbohydrates, and the World Health Organization suggests no more than 10 percent of total calories come from refined sugars. That's about 12 teaspoons of sugar for individuals who eat 2,000 calories per day. The reality is, however, that most Americans consume an average of 31 teaspoons of added sugars per day—or about 20% of total calorie intake! (6)

Breaking bread at your next meal doesn't have to wreak havoc on your body. You can control your weight, maintain healthy blood sugar levels and support immunity by following these no-fail strategies for a healthy balanced diet:

- Always combine carbohydrates with protein. Add lean animal proteins or soy foods to colorful fruits and vegetables and hearty whole grains. Eating a "mixed" meal keeps you satisfied and you'll be less likely to need a pick-me-up snack between meals.
- Focus on fiber. Dietary fiber can help maintain normal blood sugar levels and allows the body to rid itself of toxic compounds. You can easily obtain 25 grams of fiber per day by eating a high fiber cereal topped with fresh fruit for breakfast, homemade bean soup with whole wheat crackers, a side salad and a piece of fruit for lunch and stir-fried veggies and tofu over brown rice for dinner. Don't forget to drink more water when you increase your fiber intake.
- Have regular mealtimes. This can be difficult given our hectic lifestyles, but if you skip meals or have erratic eating patterns, you may find yourself reaching for something sweet in order to satisfy your hunger.
- Limit sweets in your diet, such as candy, ice cream and bakery items to special occasions. Remember that special occasions are not defined as days that end in the word "day".
- Watch portion sizes. Read nutrition facts labels. You might be surprised to learn that your usual plate of spaghetti delivers four to five servings of pasta!
- Read labels to identify hidden sugars in processed foods and so-called healthy beverages. Sweeteners have many names, including brown sugar, corn syrup, dextrose, fructose, glucose, invert sugar, molasses, and turbinado sugar. Sugars can be easily recognized by the "ose" endings.

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By Kim Dalzell, PhD, RD, LD



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Low Carb for Cancer Patients?

Cancer Fighter Magazine, Summer 2004

Take the Atkins' Revolution, line the supermarket shelves with tempting, low-carb snack foods, and throw in the clever sound bite "sugar feeds cancer", and it's no wonder that those who are cancer-concerned are cutting carbohydrates, piling on the protein and crunching into "carb-smart" crackers—all in an attempt to look better, feel better and restore their health.

The concept of achieving optimal health by munching on a double bacon cheeseburger wrapped in a leaf of lettuce can be quite appealing to some. A low-carb diet does appear to have some merit. After all, studies have shown that those who follow the advice of the late Dr. Atkins and other low-carb diet proponents are able to lose weight and decrease unhealthy blood triglyceride levels. Furthermore, researchers have linked diets high in processed sugar to an increased risk of breast, colon and pancreatic cancers. Blood sugar elevations, in response to diets high in refined carbohydrates, may also negatively impact immunity by impairing white blood cell production. These possible health hazards, plus the risks of diabetic complications and tooth decay, make the choice to avoid sugar crystal clear!

So why is there continued debate over whether "to carb" or "not to carb"? Despite (or perhaps because of) the widespread media coverage about these diets, many people are still "carbohydrate confused"—they don't fully understand the difference between "bad" carbohydrates (like white sugar, flour and refined food products containing these ingredients) and "good" carbohydrates (like legumes, whole grains and starchy vegetables). They spend their energy and valuable time searching for the glycemic index of certain foods without taking into account the effect of the whole meal on blood sugar levels. Believing in the basic tenet that carbohydrates are toxic may lead an individual to severely restrict every kind of carbohydrate, an especially bad idea if someone is undergoing cancer treatment. Losing weight too quickly or avoiding certain food groups may impair immunity and elevate the risk for malnutrition—increasing the likelihood that cancer treatment may need to be interrupted while the patient takes time to "rebuild". Additionally, there are no long-term clinical studies to show that low-carb diets are effective at keeping the weight off or that they are safe. A number of population studies, however, have indicated that diets consistently high in saturated fat and animal protein may raise the risk of many cancers and contribute to an unhealthy, inflamed state in the body—clogging arteries, impairing immunity and contributing to overall toxicity. In addition, diets without plenty of fruits and vegetables are lacking in health promoting vitamins, minerals, fiber and phytochemicals—cancer-protective compounds that can only be found in plants!

Breaking bread at your next meal doesn't have to wreak havoc with your blood sugar or your weight. Rather than avoid all carbohydrates or limit your meals to foods with a low glycemic index, you can control your weight and maintain blood sugar levels more effectively by eating a mixed meal: combining portions of lean animal proteins or soy with colorful fruits and vegetables and hearty grains. Dietary fiber from plants can improve glycemic control and help the body to rid itself of cancer-causing compounds.

The National Cancer Institute recommends consuming at least 25 grams of dietary fiber per day—easily obtained by eating a high fiber cereal like Kashi for Good Friends or Bran Buds for breakfast, homemade bean soup with whole wheat crackers and a piece of fruit for lunch and stir-fried veggies and tofu over brown rice for dinner. Stabilize blood sugar levels by eating small, frequent meals throughout the day and never, ever skip a meal. If you limit sweets in your diet (like table sugar, desserts, candies and bakery items) for special occasions, watch portion sizes and include a never-a-quick-fix-but-always-effective exercise plan, you can achieve optimal health without going crazy over carbohydrates. Now that's having your cake (oatmeal-raisin-walnut-carrot cake, of course!) and eating it too!



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Assistance in the Vitamin Aisle

Caregiver Magazine Online, 2006

Whether in good or ill health, many of us take dietary supplements in an attempt to feel better, have more energy and enhance our health potential. And even if you don't take dietary supplements, as a caregiver, you may find yourself in the position of making important decisions about nutritional supplements for your loved one—a confusing and often daunting task given the vast amount of nutrition misinformation and cleverly formulated health claims. Friends, family members and other well-meaning individuals may be able to offer you some advice, but how can you be sure it is the right advice for your loved one?

The optimal solution is to seek the assistance of a licensed professional who is trained in the field of nutrition—someone who can thoroughly review your loved one's medical history, lifestyle habits, current medication usage and other important health aspects in order to formulate a safe, therapeutically effective and individualized vitamin regimen. The American Dietetic Association at 800-877-1600 can help you locate someone in your area.

The unfortunate reality is that most people don't seek professional advice about dietary supplements, choosing instead to "self-prescribe". So, for all you do-it-yourselfers, here are some practical supplement-savvy suggestions to help you make sound decisions for your loved one's health (and possibly your own!):

Don't assume that supplements are safe just because they are sold over-the-counter. Dietary supplements can have pharmacological, or drug-like, actions that may interfere with prescription drugs or significantly affect how the body functions. Some supplements can cause side effects that a doctor may erroneously attribute to a prescription drug or medical therapy—leading to discontinued or delayed medical treatment for your loved one. For this reason, it is prudent to inform the doctor about which supplements your loved one is taking or intending to take.

Food should come first. The threat of malnutrition looms large in the chronically ill population, so it's important to remember that supplements should not be used as a replacement to food. If your loved one can't eat very much, it is more important to fill their stomach with nourishing food rather than herbal teas, liquid concoctions, pills and powders.

Don't let your emotions drive your dietary supplement decisions. As you strive to help your loved one get better, you may become vulnerable to individuals who are offering the "miracle" health cure. A good rule of thumb regarding any health claims is: if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is. Remember, also, that reliable nutrition advice usually comes from individuals who have nothing to gain by giving it.

Think cost-effective. Dietary supplements are expensive, so if you find your wallet is getting thin, invest in a professional opinion before you make another trip to the health food store. A nutrition consultation typically costs between \$50 and \$100—the same amount of money that many consumers usually spend per month on dietary supplements.



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Quality does matter. Lower cost, "value-priced" dietary supplements may contain fillers, additives and coal tars that can cause stomach upset or allergic reactions. The purity of the product is one of the most important characteristics of a reputable vitamin brand and something you can readily check by contacting the manufacturer and asking for independent testing results. Be aware of companies that supply internal graphs or charts on their products that could be construed as evidence-based research.

Be respectful of your loved one's decision to take nutritional supplements. Even if you don't agree, reduce a potential stressful situation by gently encouraging them to seek professional guidance about their supplement choices. On the other hand, listen to and respect your loved one's wishes not to take dietary supplements, even if you think they should.

The vitamin aisle should be no place for confusion! Use the above strategies to evaluate the safety and efficacy of dietary supplements so that you can feel confident that you are making responsible nutrition supplement decisions on behalf of your loved one.

Dr. Kim Dalzell is a nationally recognized expert on holistic nutrition, professional speaker, registered dietitian and award-winning author. For additional nutrition information, please visit her website at www.naturesanswertocancer.com.



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Nature's Way To Wellness

Coping Magazine, Jul/Aug 2004

The ancient Chinese believed that our health and well-being are influenced by nature. As you enjoy the sunshine and lush plant growth this summer, you have a perfect opportunity to reflect on how this season's gifts can impact your health.

Unfortunately, we are all guilty of blocking out the voices of nature—replacing them with supersized orders of fast food and negative thoughts that impact our daily actions and wreak havoc on the body, mind and spirit. And although you can't always avoid poor dietary choices or stressful situations, you can take steps to stop destructive patterns of behavior and channel your positive energies toward balanced wellness.

Achieving balance through nutrition should be a gradual process, especially if you eat a diet rich in refined sugars and unhealthy fats, so that small changes will not overwhelm you. Thankfully, we tend to eat less as the weather warms up, so moving away from a processed diet and toward a whole-foods diet is almost an automatic response.

In keeping with summertime vitality, your diet should be packed with brightly colored fruits and fresh greens. Perfect plant choices for the summer season include asparagus, beets, broccoli, carrots, cantaloupe, honeydew and berries. Now is also a great time to experiment with sprouts—top an open-faced tuna sandwich or dinner salad with raw broccoli, radish and sunflower sprouts that contain enzymes to support digestion and are packed with a variety of cancer-fighting chemicals.

Many of the baby greens, such as mustard, chards and kales, can be consumed raw or lightly sautéed. These greens contain plant chemicals like indoles and coumarins, which may have potent anti-tumor and antioxidant activity. Plants are also a good source of dietary fiber, which helps the body to detoxify by binding to cancer-causing agents in the colon and promoting normal elimination.

Food preparation during the summer becomes simpler, too, as more foods can be eaten raw, quickly stir-fried or grilled. Lean chicken or cubes of firm tofu or tempeh tossed into a ginger sauté of vegetables such as onions, red peppers and sugar snap peas served over brown rice makes a colorful and refreshing dinner. Make sure to drink plenty of purified water to help cleanse your body of pollutants or try a refreshing glass of antioxidant-packed iced green tea.

Achieving balance through movement becomes easier in nice weather, too. As the sun warms our Earth, we gravitate outside to enjoy the beauty of nature. Studies show that even moderate amounts of exercise may support immunity and reduce stress, so establishing a daily exercise routine is critical for whole body health. If you are thinking about beginning to exercise or need to limit activity during treatment, ask your physician if gentle movements are permissible.

Yoga, tai chi or qigong (pronounced chee-gong) are light physical exercises that combine breathing techniques and slow body movements to promote flexibility and enhanced well-being. Additionally, massage, yoga and acupuncture have all been shown to relieve chronic pain and support wellness. Acupuncture is one of the oldest systems of healing in the world—helping to cleanse the body by moving internal energy, or qi (pronounced chee), as a means of restoring mental and physical health.



Nature's Answer to Cancer

Release your inner healing, naturally!



KIM DALZELL
Ph.D, R.D., L.D.
Author of "Challenge
Cancer and Win!"

Fill your home with reminders of nature—pluck some daisies from your garden and display them in several places, or listen to music created with nature's sounds of the ocean or sweet birdsong. In addition, nurture your spiritual side by praying, meditating or attending religious services. Studies suggest that faith can positively influence your emotions and help you cope with your cancer treatment and recovery.

So often, when you stop for a moment to clearly evaluate your life, your awareness of balance is reawakened and guides you back to a state of natural simplicity. Begin each day by making choices that support whole body wellness and as these healthy practices become internalized, you will experience a new vitality and a kind of renewal that nature intends.

Kim Dalzell, PhD, RD, LD is an internationally recognized author and cancer and nutrition expert. Her website is <http://www.naturesanswertocancer.com>



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Answering the Call—Delivering Nutrition Services to Cancer Patients

The Ireland Report on Succeeding in Women's Health, Jan/Feb 2004

The Disconnect

The allopathic community is often indifferent to nutrition, exercise and other social and spiritual dimensions that can assist whole person healing, motivating those with cancer to coordinate their own complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) treatment plan—an especially daunting and unsafe practice for anyone who is not trained to view health information with a critical eye. People with cancer are willing to spend the money, time and energy necessary to incorporate CAM practices into their treatment plan for a number of reasons. Patients report that they feel more in control and hopeful if they are part of the decision-making process. They also believe that CAM therapies will help them heal faster, tolerate treatment better and improve their quality of life. Without proper guidance, however, they may realize significant safety and cost implications. For example, when health food store employees were asked about treatment options for breast cancer, 68% of them did not address potential drug-nutrient interactions when recommending dietary supplements and one employee advised against continuing Tamoxifen. (1) Out-of-pocket expenses for a "kitchen-sink" approach to dietary supplementation may run into hundreds of dollars per month.

Providing the Link

At Cancer Treatment Centers of America (CTCA), cancer patients, in coordination with a team of physicians, nurses, nutritionists, naturopaths, psychologists, social workers and clergy, choose an integrative cancer treatment plan. Coined Patient Empowerment Medicine (PEM), this proactive patient model is the key to truly integrative cancer care and the underlying philosophy of CTCA. As a service to the community, CTCA also provides health care information through Cancer Resource Center (800-940-2882), a public outreach facility that offers free information about cancer prevention and cancer treatment options, as well as low cost mammograms and fee-for-service nutrition counseling.

Cancer Resource Center's Holistic Nutrition Services is an innovative, evidence-based nutrition counseling program established to help CAM-savvy cancer patients who don't have access to integrative nutrition education. The program has been successful, in large part, because of CTCA's national marketing efforts to inform the public about complementary treatment options in cancer care. Oncology information specialists at CTCA direct callers to Cancer Resource Center when patients or their caregivers desire research assistance or nutritional guidance.

Making the Connection

Individuals who call Cancer Resource Center are offered a customized information packet that includes requested materials, general nutrition guidelines and a Holistic Nutrition Services brochure and questionnaire. The brochure describes a wide array of nutrition counseling options available to fit virtually every budget and interest level—from a 5-minute free "courtesy" call to a one-hour comprehensive counseling session for \$175. Follow-up sessions are also available and patients are encouraged to return for reassessment if significant health changes occur. If the patient desires a consultation, they complete the questionnaire (detailing diagnosis and current treatment plan, pertinent medical history, gastrointestinal function, prescription drug usage, etc.), attach a recent chemistry panel and CBC, and return it to CRC. Once received, a staff member contacts the patient to arrange an appointment. Patients are responsible for payment at time of service and credit cards, personal checks or money orders are accepted.



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Most insurance companies do not pay for nutritional counseling related to cancer care; however, some patients have been successful in obtaining partial reimbursement for nutritional services.

At the appointed date and time, a licensed nutritionist contacts the patient or caregiver by phone. When feasible, the patient and a family member are teleconferenced to help the nutritionist develop a cohesive nutrition program. Patients are encouraged to discuss all diet and supplement recommendations with their oncologist. Depending on the type of consultation session chosen, the nutritionist provides a myriad of nutrition information, which may include:

- General guidance about food choices
- Dietary and lifestyle assessment
- Malnutrition risk assessment and recommendations
- Analysis of food record for potential nutrient deficiencies
- Drug-nutrient interactions
- Analysis of current dietary supplement program
- Analysis of consumer brands, product literature claims
- Natural therapies for cancer treatment side effects
- Brand recommendations for dietary supplements
- Personalized vitamin and herbal recommendations
- Cancer-specific dietary advice
- Additional resources

Hearing The Message

Use of CAM, including dietary change and nutritional supplementation, is very frequent in cancer patients (2), but most medical facilities don't provide an effective environment for coordinating complementary practices into conventional treatment. There is a need for early and ongoing nutrition intervention (3) and responding to cancer patients' demand for integrated nutritional therapy can have significant benefits. Proactive nutrition support can enhance survival of terminally ill patients (4) and reduce hospital costs for malnourished patients. (5) Individualized nutritional counseling can improve nutritional intake and appears to enhance patients' quality of life (6). Perhaps just as important, providing guidance about nutrition and other complementary therapies encourages and motivates patients toward a hopeful recovery. Ultimately, every healthcare professional has the moral imperative to ensure that a cancer patient's call for CAM integration does not go unanswered.

Written by Kim Dalzell, PhD, RD, LD, who is an international nutrition consultant, author and professional speaker (www.naturesanswertocancer.com). She is past director of Holistic Nutrition Services at Cancer Resource Center in Gurnee, Illinois.

Resources

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Dietitian Encourages a Health Dose of CAM

Chicago Tribune, Healthcare Viewpoint – June 8, 2003

He asked, "Do you know anything about Essiac tea?" My blank stare and still voice spoke volumes. Once again I felt ill prepared to handle a question far removed from any subject I'd ever learned in my conservative dietetics training. I'd had enough. I didn't want to watch another cancer patient's eyes express disappointment over the confines of traditional medicine or my own educational limitations. That was the day my career took an unexpected and miraculous turn.

Some medical communities have shown slow interest in mainstreaming complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) into traditional cancer settings. The concept of CAM certainly isn't new, and we have a multitude of accepted research to show that cancer is a body, mind and spirit disease—so why wouldn't we want to treat it that way? Many complementary therapies such as guided imagery, Chinese Medicine, art or music therapy, and nutritional therapy can have profound effects on cancer treatment outcomes when combined with traditional surgery, chemotherapy and radiation.

I believe the push to integrate nontraditional therapies into conventional cancer treatment has come from the cancer patients themselves. To their benefit, many of them are questioning the efficacy of alternative cancer therapies and expecting their doctors, nurses, dietitians and other ancillary providers to give them straightforward, unbiased answers.

A black stare or worse, a negative reaction from their healthcare provider sets up a series of unfortunate circumstances for the patient. They have no choice but to sift through and self-interpret the glut of information available to them via the Internet, health magazines, emotionally charged testimonials, and clever product marketing strategies. Studies have found that patients often go to friends or family for advice about which vitamins and herbs to take. And, as many as 70 percent of Americans don't tell their physician that they use some form of complementary medicine, including the use of nutritional supplements. This non-disclosure of CAM use can lead to serious drug-nutrient or herbal interactions or make cancer treatments less effective.

As a healthcare provider, I knew I needed to responsibly guide my patients through the CAM maze, so I began searching for an organization that practiced integrative medicine. To my surprise, I found one! I had the unique opportunity to combine my education in traditional and holistic nutrition with many other disciplines while working at a cancer treatment facility where medical and surgical oncologists, nurses, psychologists, pastors, and nutritionists worked together to create a congruent treatment plan for each patient. Collaborating with like-minded professionals made it "safe" to look outside my traditional dietetic boundaries and I was encouraged by mentors to expand my knowledge in the field of nutrition.

I remember Bob, a man diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, who asked me if nutritional therapy could help him. He explained that his doctors had only given him six months to live and that he was willing to fight his cancer until the end. I didn't give him false hope, but did promise I would do everything I could to help him. Together, we developed an individualized nutritional program and he worked with other providers to incorporate guided imagery and exercise into his treatment plan. After a year, he began to show some dramatic results. Two years went by and he had gone back to work. He calls me every September, on the date of the anniversary when he was supposed to have died. I count on his call every September, and so far, five years later, he hasn't let me down. While his results certainly aren't typical of the average pancreatic cancer patient, his story does demonstrate very effectively the need for and benefit of alternative choices for cancer patients.



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I would suggest that healthcare professionals who are interested in CM pursue continuing education in the field of complementary medicine. They should also read scientific journals that publish research related to CAM (Journal of Complementary and Alternative Medicine, Journal of Natural Medicine, etc.) and find mentors within their organization or alternative healing practitioners in the community who are willing to guide and support growth in the field of complementary medicine. Joining an organization that has formed a specialty group can be very instrumental for professional networking. For example, The American Dietetic Association has Nutrition in Complementary Care Dietetic Practice Group with thousands of dietitian members.

Most healthcare providers intuitively want to help others, but may be missing an exciting opportunity to really make a difference in the lives of their patients. Progressing from allopathic medicine to the dynamic field of complementary and alternative medicine can be time-consuming, overwhelming and at times, frustrating. The continued mainstreaming of complementary medicine can continue only if healthcare professionals are willing to expand their horizons. The road to CAM can be long and arduous, but one look in your patient's eyes can make the journey absolutely worthwhile.

Kim Dalzell is a licensed dietitian and the author of Challenge Cancer and Win! For more information visit www.naturesanswertocancer.com.