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Effectiveness of Dietary Habits in Women Cancer Patients

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Abstract

It has been estimated that 30–40 percent of all cancers can be prevented by lifestyle and dietary measures alone. Obesity, nutrient sparse foods such as concentrated sugars and refined flour products that contribute to impaired glucose metabolism (which leads to diabetes), low fiber intake, consumption of red meat, and imbalance of omega 3 and omega 6 fats all contribute to excess cancer risk. Intake of flax seed, especially its lignan fraction, and abundant portions of fruits and vegetables will lower cancer risk. Allium and cruciferous vegetables are especially beneficial, with broccoli sprouts being the densest source of sulforaphane. Protective elements in a cancer prevention diet include selenium, folic acid, vitamin B-12, vitamin D, chlorophyll, and antioxidants such as the carotenoids (α -carotene, β -carotene, lycopene, lutein, cryptoxanthin). Ascorbic acid has limited benefits orally, but could be very beneficial intravenously. Supplementary use of oral digestive enzymes and probiotics also has merit as anticancer dietary measures. When a diet is compiled according to the guidelines here it is likely that there would be at least a 60–70 percent decrease in breast, colorectal, and prostate cancers, and even a 40–50 percent decrease in lung cancer, along with similar reductions in cancers at other sites. Such a diet would be conducive to preventing cancer and would favor recovery from cancer as well. Eating too much food is one of the main risk factors for cancer. This can be shown two ways: (1) by the additional risks of malignancies caused by obesity, and (2) by the protective effect of eating less food. Sixty-four percent of the adult population is overweight or obese. About 1 in 50 is now severely obese (BMI > 40 kg/m²).

Keywords: Obesity, low fiber intake, excess cancer risk, chlorophyll, antioxidant

Introduction

"When you're being treated for cancer, it's important to avoid extreme diets that may leave you short on key nutrients," says Veronica McLymont, PhD, RD, director of food and nutrition services at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center. Instead, focus on eating a balanced diet. Ask your oncologist or a nutritionist if you need extra calories and protein to keep your strength up during treatment.

Choose whole grain breads and cereals. Drink 100% fruit or vegetable juices. (Make sure they are pasteurized because you may be more susceptible to germs while you're getting cancer treatment.) Fill half of your plate with vegetables and fruits. A few times a week, choose meatless meals such as vegetarian lasagna or vegetable stir-fry. Snack on carrot sticks, sweet pepper slices, and fresh or dried fruits. Have a leafy green salad with dinner. Limit sugary foods -- the kind with lots of calories but very little nutrition. Pick lean meats and fish more often than red meat and processed meats.

One of the easiest things for a person touched by cancer to address is their diet. Here are 12 foods that can each play a role in fighting one or more steps in the multi-step cancer process. Remember that 'good nourishment' is a crucial weapon in the fight against cancer and any illness. Good cancer nutrition can be vital in increasing your personal odds of survival.

Remember too that natural compounds are likely to do you a lot more good than synthetic pills! So here are a few additions to your cancer diet, as a part of your own Integrated Cancer Treatment Programme.

Antioxidant Rich Food for the treatment of Cancer

Oily Fish

Fish oil will provide long chain omega-3, a powerful anti-inflammatory in the body that minimizes

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COX-2 and its abilities to drive localized negative hormones called eicosanoids which inflame and irritate. Omega-3 has been shown to re-lengthen telomeres, which shorten when you have cancer putting the DNA structure at risk, and reducing longevity. Oily fish also contain vitamin A, an important vitamin in the fight against cancer (herring, mackerel and salmon are top of the list). Fish oils have been linked to reduced levels of prostate, breast and colon cancer. Research shows they help prevent cachexia when having chemotherapy. You'll also get a little vitamin D from them, another proven cancer-fighter.

Carrots

Along with apricots, peppers and pumpkins, they provide cancer carotenoids like beta-carotene, which converts to vitamin A, when required by the body. 1 cup of carrot juice, 2 sweet potatoes, 16 dried apricots and 4 cups of red cherries will each provide 25mgs. Don't eat them all at once - people have been known to turn a little orange! A great juice to make yourself involves carrots and apples (for quercetin) and beetroot (for anthocyanins). A real cancer fighting drink! Carotenoids are also found in natural food sources such as chlorella.

Red and Yellow Peppers

The top source of vitamin C in the UK - even better than oranges. Vitamin C strengthens your immune cells and neutralises toxins. Linus Pauling thought cancer patients should consume 2 to 10 gms per day. A large red pepper is 250 mgs. 200 gms raw broccoli 175 mgs. 150 gms papaya 90 mgs. An orange 65 mgs. Berries and cherries are great sources. Red and yellow peppers are also good sources of carotenoids.

Sunflower Seeds

High in zinc and vitamin E. Zinc helps vitamin C do its work and accelerates healing time. It is important to a healthy prostate. You need 15 to 25 mgs per day. Five tablespoons of sunflower seeds give you 10 mgs. Best are oysters, 3 are enough. Milk can block zinc absorption. Sunflower seeds will also provide a little selenium.

Pumpkin Seeds

Can be mixed with the sunflower seeds in your morning muesli. 5 tablespoons will each provide 20 mgs of vitamin E, the ultimate cancer buster, which inhibits cancer cell growth and protects immune cells from free radicals. Vitamin E boosts your immune system's fighting abilities. The target is 300-600 mgs and is difficult to achieve without supplements. Green vegetables, soya and almonds are also good sources.

Brazil Nuts

Six cracked nuts will give you your daily selenium; 100 to 200 mcgs is the goal. Selenium is a very potent anti-cancer agent. Eight slices of wholemeal bread, an organic egg, or a large chicken breast will also be enough. Tuna, onions, broccoli and tomatoes contain selenium too.

Mushrooms

There's an enormous body of research evidence now that shows how 'medicinal' mushrooms (Shiitake, Maiitake, cordyceps etc) boost the immune system and fight cancer. Even the button mushroom has cancer fighting ingredients. We have a great review on medicinal mushrooms.

Tomatoes

Seven to ten helpings per week, especially cooked. According

to Harvard research 7-10 helpings a week cuts prostate symptoms by 40% and has an influence on many cancers e.g.: lung; colon; cervix; breast. Lycopene is the prime active ingredient, and 25 - 40 mgs the desired daily dose.

It is also found in strawberries, peppers, carrots and peaches, but one tin of tomato soup has 65 mgs alone. Lycopene helps reduce 'bad' fat levels in the blood stream and is a strong antioxidant.

Egg Yolk

Along with green leafy vegetables, avocado, beans, carrots, apricots and pumpkins, egg yolk will give you folic acid. This will help your DNA to replicate properly and protect it during radiotherapy. 400 micrograms is a recommended amount. Egg yolk, greens and whole grains are the best sources of folate, biotin, niacin and vitamin B6 are all B vitamins that help in the cancer fight.

Broccoli

And other green cruciferous vegetables e.g. cabbage, kale, Brussels sprouts, contain fibre which helps eliminate toxins. Moreover, the fibre is rich in galactose, which binds to damaging agents in the intestine. Cruciferous vegetables also contain indoles, and especially indole-3-carbinol which, along with its metabolite DIM, modifies and diminishes aggressive oestrogen action, can modify cellular oestrogen receptor sites, and aids in fighting oestrogen-driven cancers like some breast, prostate, brain and colorectal cancers.

Finally, sulphoraphane in broccoli and especially sprouting broccoli seeds helps the liver detoxify, and reduces stomach cancer tumours.

Garlic

It is a truly wonderful food. It seems to act to stop the spread of cancer in a number of ways, for example by stopping blood supply forming for tumours.

Garlic has a number of active ingredients. It contains selenium, tryptophan and sulphur based active agents that attack cancer cells. Two or three raw cloves of garlic per day will ward off more than vampires.

Beetroot

And cherries, aubergines, red grapes - indeed any purple coloured fruits and vegetables. They contain anthocyanins (and sometimes also resveratrol). Anthocyanins have been shown to kill cancer cells; resveratrol has research supporting its role in fighting certain cancers like blood and brain cancers too.

Pulses

Lentils, chickpeas, beans and even soya etc. are a great source of fibre and protein without the animal fat.

Green tea

Pulses also contain isoflavones, phytoestrogens. People get confused about plant oestrogen. The cells of your body have oestrogen receptor sites. When one form of human oestrogen (oestradiol) binds to them, the result is havoc inside your cells. About 40 times less potent is human oestrogen oestrone and about 40 to 50 times less potent still are plant oestrogens. Now which would you rather have sitting on your receptors? Pulses also provide fibres like lignans that can help neutralise free-radicals in the gut and blood stream. Eat pulses every two days.

Supplements

The National Cancer Institute in America produced research in July/August 2012 (see Cancer Watch). Dr Young and her team of researchers concluded that a poor diet (too much glucose, bad fats, cows' dairy, too much salt, too many refined and junk foods) could cause a cancer to regrow from any cancer stem cells left behind after orthodox treatment. Dr Young also concluded that certain natural compounds in foods could stop this regrowth. Those compounds they said 'could be taken as supplements'. This list included: Sulphorapanes, resveratrol, curcumin, piperine (black pepper), vitamin E (naturally sourced and including all 8 tocopherols and tocotrienols) and vitamin A, theanine and choline, EGCG from green tea, and genistein (from pulses and the herb red clover).

Conclusion

What is the result when all of these things are put together? What if all of these factors reviewed here were taken into account and put into practice? This anticancer diet would have: Adequate, but not excessive calories, 10 or more servings of vegetables a day, including cruciferous and allium vegetables; vegetable juice could meet part of this goal, 4 or more servings of fruits a day, High in fiber, No refined sugar, No refined flour, Low in total fat, but containing necessary essential fatty acids, No red meat, A balanced ratio of omega 3 and omega 6 fats and would include DHA, Flax seed as a source of phytoestrogens, Supplemented with ~200 µg/day selenium, Supplemented with 1,000 µg/day methylcobalamin (B-12), Very rich in folic acid (from dark green vegetables), Adequate sunshine to get vitamin D, or use 1,000 IU/day supplement, Very rich in antioxidants and phytochemicals from fruits and vegetables, including α -carotene, β -carotene, β -cryptoxanthin, vitamin C (from foods), vitamin E (from foods), Very rich in chlorophyll, Supplemented with beneficial probiotics, Supplemented with oral enzymes

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