

Nutritional Healing from Cancer: The Fundamentals of an Alkaline Diet

Published 6-1-13 on www.GreenMedInfo.com

Excerpt from *The Cancer Alternative* by Nancy Elizabeth Shaw

There is something that every cancer patient should hear from their oncologist when they are first diagnosed. They should be told that by making certain dietary changes, they could increase their chances of healing from cancer dramatically, no matter what course of treatment they pursue.

Cancer patients should be informed that nutrition is their first and best defense when starting down the path of healing from cancer. Information should be provided about how to switch to an alkaline diet,ⁱ composed of primarily vegetables, with a small amount of fruit, grains and protein. This diet is similar to the ketogenicⁱⁱ diet, which is much discussed in the oncology press, but with further reduction in total protein consumption as well as grains, processed fats and sugar, to help control inflammation in the body.

Instead, the dietary information provided to cancer patients is an afterthought, and amazingly, usually includes foods and meal preparation techniques that are known promoters of cancer progression.ⁱⁱⁱ Clearly, there is a disconnect between very well documented information on diet and cancer progression and those who communicate most often with cancer patients – the oncology teams.

The modern way of life, particularly in fast-paced Western countries, does not lend itself to an anti-cancer, alkaline diet. Convenience food products, microwave meals, packaged snacks and fast food dominate many people's daily menu. It should come as no surprise that these foods are not optimal if you are battling cancer.

But what should a newly diagnosed cancer patient do, right away, to help themselves prepare for the treatments to come and increase their chances for healing?

Here are the six most important dietary changes every cancer patient should make. While they seem daunting at first, really what the cancer patient needs to do is to go back to eating in the way that people have done since the beginning of time: fresh food, in season, simply prepared.

1. Eat an alkaline diet to reduce inflammation and improve intracellular pH

Most people in the Western world today eat a diet that promotes inflammation and increases intracellular pH, a condition called latent acidosis - understood to provide a perfect environment for cancer to proliferate. A properly constructed alkaline diet will improve your intracellular pH over time, and is the best defense against continuous inflammation in the body. It is composed primarily of organic leafy green vegetables, herbs and spices, root vegetables, onions, garlic, leek and chives, broccoli, cauliflower and cabbages, beans, lentils and peas and nuts and seeds,

combined with a small amount (a cup or two per day) of non-gluten grains such as rice. A serving of between two and four ounces of clean fish, organic poultry or grass-fed meat, several times per week, can be part of a healthy, alkaline oriented diet. Two to three pieces of whole fresh fruit a day help balance your vitamin and mineral consumption. The more of your vegetables and fruits you enjoy raw, the better.^{iv}

2. Eliminate sugar.^v

Cancer cells use more glucose (sugar) per unit of time than other cells. Sugar metabolism creates acid, which also supports cancer progression. Further, a diet high in sugars, including fruits, triggers the insulin response. If you frequently eat sugar or fruit throughout the day, you suppress your immune function while increasing the insulin levels in your body, creating insulin resistance. Insulin resistance has been directly tied to cancer proliferation. Processed sugar depletes magnesium in the body, another contributor to cancer proliferation. High fructose corn syrup, because of its processing methodology, is high in mercury, a cancer-promoting toxin in the body. The recommendation to eliminate sugar includes sugar in all its forms, even “natural” sugars like honey and agave, as well as white sugar and high fructose corn syrup. Enjoy unsweetened applesauce, two or three figs or dried apricots, or a piece of fresh pineapple if you need a sweet treat. Moderation with fruit is important, as fructose has been shown to increase the rate of cancer cell division as much as two-fold – more than other forms of sugar.^{vi}

3. Eliminate gluten.^{vii}

Glutenous grains cause inflammation. Inflammation promotes cancer progression. This means avoiding high-gluten grains such as wheat, spelt or rye, including the whole grains. Pastas, cereals, bread, muffins, cakes, crackers, cookies and other baked goods are excluded from an alkaline, cancer-suppression diet. Cancer patients should enjoy whole, non-gluten grains such as rice, buckwheat, quinoa, millet and amaranth. However, using “gluten free” prepared products is a mistake, as most of them have added sugar or processed oils and will therefore fall outside of the alkaline diet parameters for cancer.

4. Eliminate dairy products.

Cow dairy has been identified in a very large study compiled by Prof. (Emeritus) T. Colin Campbell, PhD, Cornell University as one of the most cancer promoting foods.^{viii} Strangely enough, it is the protein that is the culprit – casein protein. High protein yogurts made with added powdered milk or whey are even more cancer promoting than plain milk, yogurt or cheese. However, all dairy products should be eliminated from the diet when you are fighting cancer. Dairy products create inflammation, cause bone deterioration (yes it is true, because of the high acid production during digestion of dairy) and promote cancer progression in a similar fashion to sugar

5. Use only olive oil, coconut oil and avocado oil in your diet

Use only natural, cold-pressed olive oil, coconut oil or avocado oil – organic where possible. These oils are naturally anti-inflammatory, thus provide a soothing and healing benefit to inflamed and potentially cancerous cells in the body. Coconut oil in particular has also been shown to have a mild antibacterial/antifungal effect, helpful for cancer patients with a lowered immune function, as well as direct anti-cancer properties. Oils that should be eliminated from a cancer-suppression diet include corn, soy, canola, safflower or sunflower oils. Not only are the commercial versions of these oils produced from genetically modified plants – believed to increase cancer risk - most of them are highly processed. Processed oils, including hydrogenated (hard) oils and margarines, have been prepared at high heat to improve shelf life. This changes the oil molecules so that instead of acting as a natural conductor for all the electrical messaging in your body, these molecules create “dead spots” in your cells because they cannot conduct electricity. This interferes with healthy cell function and can promote cancer progression. Essentially cancer cells are cells that no longer respond to intracellular messaging and proliferate without purpose, impacting other cells.

6. Change what you drink

Eliminate alcohol consumption. Eliminate the consumption of bottled, canned or frozen fruit juice as they have high concentrations of sugar and many are highly acid forming. Fresh vegetable and fruit juice that you make at home or from a juice bar is encouraged, however emphasis is on *vegetable juice*. Reduce coffee consumption to one cup per day or less, and increase consumption of clean water, lightly brewed green tea (not black tea), sage tea, ginger tea and peppermint tea as both hot and cold drinks. Drink the juice of a whole, organic lemon in hot or cold water several times per day. Drink fresh carrot or carrot-beet juice daily, as these are healthy, alkaline juices for a cancer diet.

While this may sound daunting if you have enjoyed the convenience of restaurant or fast food meals or purchasing prepared meals, this switch is easier than you think. If you cook at home, it means eliminating a few foods and focusing on a few others to modify your usual recipes.

Salad is always a good choice whether at home or eating out. Whether you are making your own salad or ordering a salad in a restaurant, include grated carrots, beets, cucumbers, endives, escarole, cherry tomatoes, fennel, cabbage and spinach in any combination, in addition to or instead of romaine lettuce or mesclun greens, then dress with extra virgin olive oil and fresh lemon on the side at table, rather than tossing the salad with prepared dressing. Add some garbanzo or white beans and you'll be completely satisfied.

Japanese sushi traditionally features a large selection of fresh vegetable rolls. If you are dining out, ask for gluten-free (traditional tamari) soy sauce, order a few rolls and some Japanese green tea, and you can enjoy a quick, satisfying lunch or dinner. A bonus comes in the seaweed wrappers – full of minerals from the sea. Just avoid standard soy sauce as it has wheat in it (gluten), the Teriyaki sauce (gluten) as well as anything that is brightly colored or contains mayonnaise, as these are not on the list of healthy options. For immune deficient cancer patients, best to stay away from raw fish sushi.

Indian food features many vegetarian choices, with plenty of spice and vegetables. Unfortunately many Indian restaurants use a lot of rape-seed/canola oil in cooking, which is not recommended. Enquire about how the food is prepared and if there are some ingredients that are not optimal, just eat carefully. A good choice is channa masala (chickpea curry) with poppadum (lentil cracker-bread) and vegetable biryani rice. Nann, chapatti, paratha, puri and roti breads are typically made from wheat flour and should be avoided.

Italian cuisine is a bit more difficult since the basis of Italian cuisine is pasta made from wheat with added cheese. However, cooking at home you have endless options, and more Italian restaurants are offering a gluten free pasta choice. Many Italian menus feature dishes based on marinara (vegetarian) tomato sauce. Select preparations with no cheese and only eat a small appetizer portion of fish or meat, if any at all. Steamed or lightly sautéed vegetable dishes such as broccoli rabe or spinach with garlic are superior alkaline choices, as are salads made with chopped and grated raw vegetables. Since olive oil, garlic, tomato, vegetables, herbs and lemon are critical to Italian cooking, it is quite possible to make excellent alkaline selections if you order thoughtfully or cook Italian food at home.

And of course, you have to just let the breadbasket and the desert list pass you by.

For more information on nutritional healing for cancer patients, visit www.thecanceralternative.org or contact the author, Nancy Elizabeth Shaw at enquiries@thecanceralternative.com

ⁱ J Environ Public Health. 2012; 2012: 727630.

ⁱⁱ Implementing A Ketogenic Diet Based on Medium-chain Triglyceride Oil in Pediatric Patients with Cancer LINDA C NEBELING, PhD, MPH, RD, EDITH LERNER, PhD; *J Am Diet Assoc.* 1995; 95:693-697; Targeting energy metabolism in brain cancer through calorie restriction and the ketogenic diet B Thomas N Seyfried, Michael Kiebish, Jeremy Marsh, Purna Mukherjee Department of Biology, Boston College, Chestnut Hill, MA 02467, USA; *Journal of Cancer Research and Therapeutics*, 2009/5/9/pp 7-15.

ⁱⁱⁱ National Cancer Institute, "Eating Hints Before, During and After Cancer Treatment," NIH Publication No. 09-2079, 9-09

^{iv} Antitumor effect of medium-chain triglyceride and its influence on the self-defense system of the body. *Cancer Detect Prev.* 1998;22(3):219-24.

^v *Expert Opin Ther Targets.* 2011 Sep;15(9):1049-59. doi: 10.1517/14728222.2011.588208. Epub 2011 May 31; Klement and Kämmerer *Nutrition & Metabolism* 2011, 8:75 <http://www.nutritionandmetabolism.com/content/8/1/75>

^{vi} Fructose Induces Transketolase Flux to Promote Pancreatic Cancer Growth; Haibo Liu, Danshan Huang, David L. McArthur, et al.; *Cancer Res*; 70(15) August 1, 2010

^{vii} *The Dark Side of Wheat*, Sayer Ji, GreenMed Info, 20143

^{viii} *The China Study*, T. Colin Campbell, PhD et al; BenBella Books, Dallas, TX, 2006