

A DELICIOUS WAR ON CANCER – FOODS THAT FIGHT CANCER

By Victor M. Parachin



Nearly two decades ago, David Servan-Schreiber, M.D., Ph.D., was diagnosed with brain cancer. Although he received chemotherapy and went into remission, the cancer came back. He endured two surgeries and another 13 months of chemotherapy. He asked his oncologist if changing his diet could help him avoid another recurrence. The oncologist dismissed him saying, “Eat what you like. It won’t make a difference.” However, Servan-Schreiber had read enough to believe that a simple dietary change could help, so he began months of research, worldwide travel consulting with experts from nearly every continent, and discovered a variety of foods that fight cancer.

In his book, *Anti-Cancer: A New Way of Life*, Dr. Servan Schreiber says an anti-cancer diet is the opposite of a typical Western meat-based meal. “The anti-cancer diet is principally composed of vegetables (and legumes) accompanied by olive (or canola or flaxseed) oil or organic butter, garlic, herbs and spices.” Although some meat and eggs are consumed, “they don’t represent the main ingredient of the plate. They are primarily for added taste. This is exactly contrary of a typical Western dish – a large slice of meat in the middle with a few vegetables on the side.”

Yet, a delicious way to ward off cancer is by eating more plant-based foods. Here are some of the most effective ones in the battle against cancer.

Mushrooms. The white button mushrooms found in every grocery store may appear ordinary and humble, but eating them lowers estrogen levels, which in turn reduces the risk of breast cancer for women. The reason? They are loaded with conjugated linolenic acid, a compound that helps protect against the too-high levels of estrogen that are linked to breast cancers. Additionally, it has been noted that among those Japanese peasants who consume large amounts of mushrooms, they have a 50-percent lower rate of stomach cancer over those Japanese who do not consume many mushrooms. Consequently, a wide variety of mushrooms are staple foods in Japanese hospitals where they are especially provided to patients during chemotherapy treatments. Mushrooms are effective treatments against cancer because they contain a molecule called lentinian, which stimulates the body’s immune system.

Green tea. The Chinese, who drink vast amounts of green tea, have an ancient proverb: “Drinking a daily cup of tea will surely starve the pharmacist.” More and more studies verify that ancient wisdom about tea’s healing powers. “Angiogenesis” is a scientific term for the body’s process of growing new blood vessels to feed cancer cells. Without new blood vessels, cancer cells simply cannot expand. Green tea contains powerful nutritional molecules against the formation of new blood vessels by cancerous cells. One of those is EGCG (epigallocatechin gallate). A mere two or three cups of green tea deliver ample amounts of EGCG into the body’s blood system. They surround and feed every cell in the body preventing the growth and penetration of cancer cells. Japanese studies reveal that those women who drink two cups of green tea daily have a 50 percent less incidence of breast cancer. When green tea is combined with soy, it becomes

even more effective. Researchers at Harvard’s Laboratory of Nutrition and Metabolism discovered that green tea combined with soy reduced the size of tumors by 72 percent as well as prevented metastasis (or spreading of the cancer cells) in mice.

Turmeric. This is a bright-yellow root plant related to ginger and is widely used throughout India. It can literally spice up your health. In fact, rural people in India consume ¼ to ½ teaspoon of turmeric daily by adding it to all of their dishes. Researchers believe this root plant is responsible for the fact that rural Indians have one-fifth the rate of cancer compared to Westerners. Science reveals that cancer grows because their cells secrete an inflammation compound prompting cancerous cells to multiply. Turmeric is effective against cancer because the active ingredient in turmeric is curcumin, the strongest food-based, anti-inflammatory compound known to science. This root has caught the attention of doctors at the world-renowned M.D. Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, Texas, where turmeric is currently being used in several human clinical trials.

Berries. Blueberries, raspberries, strawberries, and blackberries contain ellagic acid, a powerful anti-cancer compound that cuts off blood supply to cancer cells, thereby preventing them from growing and expanding. Dr. Richard Beliveau, a researcher in biochemistry and professor at the University of Montreal, heads one of the largest laboratories for molecular medicine specializing in cancer biology. Dr. Beliveau has been carefully examining raspberries discovering that the ellagic acid in them slowed tumor growth significantly in mice exposed to aggressive cancer. Further tests on his part revealed that the ellagic acid in raspberries is potentially as effective as medications developed to slow the growth of blood vessels.

Garlic. This is one of the oldest medicinal herbs known to humans. Prescriptions for the use of garlic have been found on Sumerian tablets dating back to 3000 B.C. Louis Pasteur observed and recorded its antibacterial properties in 1858. After that, during World War I, garlic was widely used in bandages to prevent infections. During the Second World War, when they ran out of antibiotics, Russian soldiers used garlic in such great quantities that it came to be popularly known as “Russian penicillin.” Garlic contains sulfur compounds that promote apoptosis (cell death) in colon, breast, lung, kidney, and prostate cancer.

Tomatoes. Numerous studies show that cancer risk decreases when people eat ten or more tablespoons per week of tomato products: tomatoes themselves, red pasta sauce, and tomato paste. For men, their risk of developing prostate cancer is lowered by as much as one-third if they frequently consume foods containing tomato products. Similarly, the risk of developing breast cancer is 30 to 50 percent lower among those women who regularly eat tomatoes and related products. Researchers believe the ingredient responsible for this is lycopene, a carotenoid known for its antioxidant properties. Carotenoids attach themselves to cancerous free radicals and envelope them so that they are washed out of the body before damaging or impacting healthy cells. A study done on 48,000 men by Harvard University researchers revealed that those who ate ten servings of tomato-rich foods weekly cut their risk of prostate cancer by

nearly half. Other studies suggest that tomato-rich foods may ward off cancers of breast, lung, and digestive tract.


Interestingly, there's not much lycopene benefit from a raw tomato because it is tightly bound by the fruit's proteins and fibers. However, cooking it frees lycopene for absorption in to the body where it is then carried into the bloodstream.

Oranges. Citrus fruits such as oranges, tangerines, lemons, and grapefruit contain a substance called limonene that raises the levels of the body's enzymes, which in turn break down carcinogens while stimulating cancer-killing immune cells. They also contain glucarase, which deactivates carcinogens and ushers them out of the body. In one study, when rats were exposed to a carcinogen but also lapped up orange juice, they developed 40-percent fewer signs of cancer. Even the orange skins show potential to penetrate cancer cells and destroy them. One good way to use the skin is by grating the well-washed (undyed) skin of the fruit and then sprinkling it over salads. They can also be steeped in tea or just hot water.

Cabbage. Cabbage and other cruciform vegetables (such as brussel sprouts, bok choy, Chinese cabbage, broccoli, and cauliflower) all contain powerful anti-cancer molecules capable of detoxifying carcinogenic substances and preventing them from triggering malignant tumors. They also promote the "suicide" of some cancerous cells. One notable cancer-reducing success of cruciform vegetables was noted by researcher Victoria Kirsh, Ph.D, of Cancer Care Ontario in Toronto. She and her colleagues looked at 1,338 prostate cancer patients and observed that a great consumption of cruciferous vegetables was closely associated with a decreased risk of aggressive prostate cancer.

Chocolate. This one is very good news for chocolate lovers. Dark chocolate – more than 70-percent cocoa – contains

a high number of various antioxidants that slow the growth of cancer cells. Researcher Norman Hollengerg, M.D., Ph.D, from Harvard Medical School, noted the low rates of cancer among the Kuna people of Mexico, attributing it to their consumption of chocolate. One way to benefit from chocolate is to eat a few squares of dark chocolate for your dessert. Another suggestion is to melt dark chocolate, pouring it over a pear or small fruit salad.

It is clear from these types of studies that the human body, when it is given proper nutrients, can be quite capable of dealing with cancer. This food-and-health link was noted thousands of years ago by Hippocrates who advised, "Let medicine be your food, and let food be your medicine." 

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AMERICANS LOSE THEIR HEALTH HERO

At age 96, Jack LaLanne passed away at his home on January 23, 2011, of pneumonia after fifty-two years of preaching how to obtain a healthier body to the American public. He was a beloved icon but quite a rarity fifty years ago when obesity and ill health were not the problems of today. He initially found it difficult to persuade the general public to climb onboard his fitness and health movement and to understand the repercussions of an unhealthy diet and lack of exercise.

Jack actually began this long journey of fitness after overcoming his own addiction to sugar. Jack's mother had taken him to a lecture by Paul Bragg (an early NHF supporter) who lectured on health issues such as eliminating processed foods from your diet and the benefits of exercise. This lecture changed his life and he began a fitness regime of working out and pure food, especially raw vegetables.

He wanted to share with the public what he had learned about keeping the body fit, and that he did with his fitness television show, the opening of the first health club in the U.S. in 1936 in Oakland, California, and marketing exercise equipment. The Jack LaLanne Show ran for 34 years with many thousands of viewers.

In his nineties, he once remarked, "I can't die, it would ruin my image."

There may never be another Jack LaLanne, as these are hard shoes to fill; but his legacy is carrying on and he helped many an individual to a new lease on life the healthy way.

