

## Preventing Cancer

by Raymond Francis

Cancer is probably the single most feared disease in America, and with good reason. Our cancer rate has been steadily increasing. From 1973 to 1987, lung cancer increased by 32% and is now the leading cancerous killer for both men and women. During this same period, melanoma increased 83% and non-Hodgkin's lymphoma by 51%. Despite the expenditure of more than 50 billion dollars on cancer research, the percentage of cancer patients who die from cancer has remained essentially unchanged. We have got little value for our money, and the standard cancer treatments of radiation and chemotherapy almost always do more harm than good. In the face of this colossal failure, with billions of dollars squandered, even cancer experts are beginning to say that we should pay attention to prevention instead of treatment.

Cancer is an extremely complex, multifactorial disease which no one fully understands. This said, there are at least some things about cancer we do understand, and we can use this knowledge to help prevent cancer. Our doctors tell us cancer is an inevitable disease of aging. This is simply not true. Until recently, cancer was always a rare disease. Among traditionally healthy populations, cancer affects about 0.5 percent of the population. At the turn of the century in America, the rate was a shocking 2 to 3 percent. Now, it affects over 40% of the population and has become quite normal. Obviously something has changed for the worse. What has changed are our diets, our environment, and our lifestyles. While we have more than adequate amounts of food, the food we eat is nutrient deficient and even toxic. There is no place on earth which has not been contaminated with man-made environmental toxins, and our sedentary and stressful lifestyles have so changed that our body chemistry is affected. Since these changes are causing cancer, making different choices regarding these parameters will prevent cancer. Our diets, our behavior, and most of our toxic exposures are under our direct control.

Like any disease, cancer is a symptom of cellular malfunction. Cancerous cells have lost their ability to control their growth and they uncontrollably multiply. This process begins when there is a change in a cell's genetic makeup. In one way or another, DNA is damaged and the cell becomes defective. At this point, if the immune system is functioning normally, the cell is recognized by the immune system as being abnormal and it is destroyed. All is well unless we are producing too many defective cells and/or if the immune system is not functioning well enough to take care of the problem.

DNA can be damaged in many ways, even by a chance occurrence during the billions of DNA replications every day. In addition, free radicals can damage DNA unless they are neutralized before they reach the DNA. Free radicals can be generated by radiation like x-rays, as well as by numerous environmental chemicals including the mercury in our dental fillings, the chlorine in our water, and the ozone in our polluted air.

A rational approach to preventing cancer would be to avoid environmental carcinogens, thus preventing cumulative free radical damage to the DNA. The toxic chemicals to avoid include pesticides, industrial toxins, chlorinated and fluoridated water, tobacco smoke, hormone therapies, food additives, mercury fillings, and local anesthetics which were identified in BHN as cancer causing. Any of us can choose to use a healthy toothpaste or shampoo, and not to bring toxic things like synthetic fiber carpets into our homes. We can choose where we live and work based on minimizing our toxic exposures. We can decline x-rays. We can choose not to live near high-voltage power lines.

Since it's impossible to avoid environmental hazards completely, supplying the body with adequate amounts of a variety of anti-oxidant chemicals will also help to prevent free radical damage to the DNA. In addition, we need to keep the immune system strong by supplying it with all the raw materials it needs to help to destroy abnormal cells before they have a chance to multiply. Studies have shown supplemental vitamins C and E and N-acetylcysteine significantly increase the number of natural killer cells which attack and destroy tumor cells.

Paying attention to nutrition is absolutely essential since a chronic shortage of even one nutrient will cause disease and we know the average American is short several. The fact is malnutrition is our leading cause of death, and optimizing our nutrition is one of the most important things we must do.

Here's an example of how poor nutrition can promote cancer. New research, presented at the recent annual meeting of the Orthomolecular Health-Medicine Society which I attended, showed how a calcium deficiency can promote cancer by increasing levels of a newly discovered hormone called PHF (Parathyroid Hypertensive Factor). In the face of a calcium deficiency, which most Americans have, this hormone tells cells to take up more calcium so as not to become depleted. However, as the calcium deficiency remains, the PHF remains high and eventually results in the cells getting too much calcium, and too much calcium can promote cell proliferation and cancer. In fact, it has been postulated that shark cartilage works against cancer because it contains lots of calcium and because it is a natural PHF antagonist. Supplemental calcium may be a good cancer preventative as well as a treatment because it makes PHF decrease. Calcium is best obtained from foods like kale, chard, collard, broccoli, okra, lentils, soy beans, almonds, and supplements like Beyond Health Bone Mineral Formula.

In conclusion, our cancer epidemic results from our fundamentally changing our diets, environment, and behavior. By making different choices on a daily basis regarding our nutrition, toxic exposures, and behavior, we can do much to prevent cancer and reverse this epidemic.

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