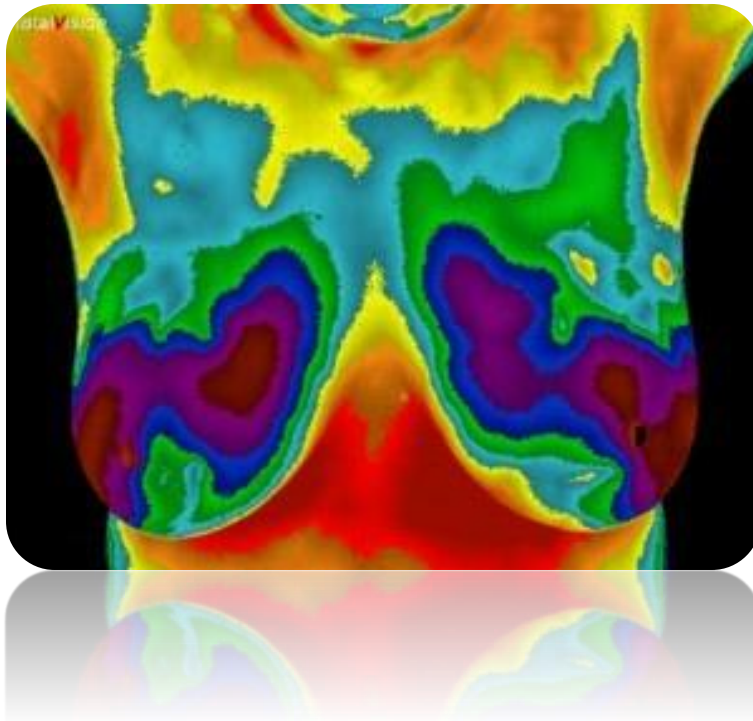


Natural Approaches to Extraordinary Breast Health

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In 1991, I finally finished the long arduous path to becoming a plastic surgeon. Two years later, after passing my boards, I sighed with relief and looked forward to a long “typical” surgical career.



But two events occurred almost immediately that radically changed my vocation plans to anything but ordinary. First, I received a letter from an insurance company denying my request to perform reconstructive breast surgery on my then 33-year-old patient.

Their justification: The surgery would be performed on what they considered “an organ with *no function*.” That letter sparked a five-year legislative campaign to pass laws requiring insurance companies to pay for breast reconstructive surgery following mastectomy. The campaign ended successfully with the passage of laws in thirty-five states, and after several meetings with President Clinton and First Lady Hilary Clinton, many members of Congress, extremely intense work, and the help of thousands—a federal law on October 21, 1998.

The second event occurred just after Thanksgiving in 1993, when **my own mother was diagnosed with breast cancer and died from it 9 months later.** At that moment, **all of my attention turned to stopping the breast cancer epidemic.** I knew there had to be ways that women could dramatically lower their risk of this horrendous deadly disease and stop it before it ever started. After searching for clues in the medical literature, I was surprised and delighted to find thousands of studies pointing out exactly why we have a breast cancer epidemic and what we can do to stop it.

The vast majority of these studies were not in obscure journals. Rather, they are well-designed and published in reputable peer-review journals, such as **the *New England Journal of Medicine***. Not surprisingly, they revealed that the American diet and lifestyle are a recipe for breast cancer, and with some simple adjustments, the risk of breast cancer can be made almost negligible.



Cultural Clues

The first clue that our culture is the culprit came from epidemiological studies.



Women in Asia, particularly in rural areas, have a much lower incidence of breast cancer¹.

But if an Asian woman moves to the United States and adopts our diet and lifestyle, within one generation her risk will match that of an American woman. A close inspection of the standard Asian diet

verses what we normally eat explains a lot. We consume large amounts of red meat and saturated animal fats enhanced with growth hormones and estrogen-mimicking chemicals, sugar and refined carbohydrates, and alcohol—all cancer-promoting.^{2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16,17} Asians consume lots of fresh vegetables cooked with spices such as turmeric and garlic, whole soy foods, green tea, mushrooms, and seaweed—all cancer-protecting.^{18,19,20,21,22,23,24,25,26,27,28,29,30,31,32,33,34,3}

Deadly Foods and Habits

Red Meat and Saturated Animal Fats

Let's take a closer look at some of the common foods in our diet and how they promote cancer. Research shows that **frequent consumption of red meat**—particularly well-done and grilled—significantly increases the risk of breast cancer. High-heat cooking processes



add to the risk because it causes the formation of new carcinogen called heterocyclic amines. Women who regularly eat red meat have a **220%-770% higher incidence of breast cancer.**^{2,3}

Meat protein isn't the only factor in red meat that contributes to its health dangers. Environmental toxins store and concentrate in saturated animal fats found in red meat and especially **whole-fat dairy.**^{5,6,7} Many of these chemicals mimic the estrogen molecule or act as growth factors for breast cancer in other ways. Another significant problem with



saturated animal fats is that they cause our cells to become more insulin resistant.¹¹ **As a result, insulin, a hormone that speeds up the growth of cancer,** tends to stay at higher serum levels.¹²

Sugar and Refined Carbohydrates

Sugar and refined carbohydrates cause blood glucose levels to surge and in response, the pancreas releases large amounts of insulin. Both of these physiologic conditions **accelerate the growth of breast cancer.** Sugar is the principal fuel source for cancer. The more one eats of it, the faster cancer will grow. A study published in August 2004 in the journal *Cancer Epidemiology, Biomarkers and Prevention* found that women who ate high carbohydrate diets had twice the risk of breast cancer.¹⁴

Insulin has two major ill effects when it comes to cancer—it facilitates glucose getting into tumor cells and promotes tumor growth. There are insulin receptors on tumor cells and when this hormone attaches to them, it causes cell division to speed up. Given these facts, it is easy to understand why women with consistently elevated serum levels of insulin are at much greater risk for being diagnosed with breast cancer. A 1998 study found that women with the highest insulin levels were 283% more likely to get breast cancer.¹⁵





Research shows that we need to seriously rethink the recommendation to consume a glass of alcohol a day for good health

Alcohol

Alcohol, particularly red wine, may decrease the risk of cardiovascular disease—but **it significantly increases the risk of breast cancer.** In fact, studies show that there is a direct linear relationship between alcohol consumption and breast cancer: One drink a day increases the risk by 11%;¹⁶ two drinks by 22% to 40%; and three drinks by 33 to 70%.¹⁷ Dana-Farber Cancer Institute researcher Wendy Chen, MD PhD reported at the 2005 annual meeting of the American Society of Clinical Oncology that even an average of a half of a glass of alcohol a day could increase the risk by 6% in premenopausal women and 18% in postmenopausal women.

Astounding Protection from Plants

The medical literature is filled with studies documenting that **the most health-promoting diet you can consume is plant-based.** Plants are nutrient-dense. Not only are they packed full of the vitamins, minerals and other nutrients essential for your health, but they also contain hundreds of plant-chemicals known as “phyto-chemicals” that act like natural medicines. If you eat a wide variety of plants—in particular fresh, organically-grown plants including vegetables, fruits, nuts seeds, whole grains, spices and herbs—your risk of not only breast cancer, but also every other type of chronic disease is dramatically reduced.





Superfoods for Super Protection

There are a variety of foods with exceptional cancer-fighting properties that you will want to include in your diet every day. Because it is difficult to get the full therapeutic amounts of these foods every day, taking them as a nutritional supplement may be the best approach.

Two great examples are green tea and the Indian spice turmeric. Both green tea and turmeric contain extraordinary anticancer properties and have been extensively researched. Our understanding of their mechanisms of action against breast cancer is



extremely sophisticated. **Green tea** is highly protective in general against many different types of cancers and chronic degenerative disorders due to its potent antioxidant³⁶ and anti-inflammatory

properties.³⁷ Women who regularly drink green tea have a much lower incidence of breast cancer.^{38, 39} Tea drinkers diagnosed with breast cancer have a significantly better prognosis.⁴⁰ Researchers have discovered many specific reasons for these statistics. For instance, green tea decreases the body's production of estradiol (the strongest and



most abundant form of natural estrogen produced by the body and the type most associated with an increased risk of breast cancer) and increases the number of serum sex hormone-binding globulin proteins⁴¹ which results in lower serum free estrogen (*free* estrogen can attach to estrogen receptors in breast cells but protein-bound estrogen cannot).

Green tea is also **very beneficial for those with breast cancer because it reduces the risk of metastasis⁴² and recurrences,⁴³** inhibits vascular endothelial growth factor (VEGF)^{44, 45} thus blocks tumor angiogenesis or new blood vessel growth into the tumors,^{46, 47} and enhances the effectiveness of chemotherapy through a pump-mechanism in the cell membrane that causes chemotherapy to concentrate 2 to 3 times greater than normal in tumor cells. It also protects against the damaging effects of these drugs by pumping chemotherapy out of normal cells.^{48, 49}



Turmeric—responsible for the bright yellow-orange color in curry—has so many health-promoting and -protecting qualities, it is considered one of—if not the—most spectacularly medicinal spices ever researched. It is the most researched plant in the medical literature with over 15,000 published studies that reveal its impressive broad health-enhancing properties, as well as the very specific ways it guards against various diseases.



Turmeric displays powerful anti-inflammatory⁵⁰, antioxidant (about 300 times greater than vitamin E)⁵¹ and immune boosting effects⁵², *and* it also has very specific anticancer actions, especially against breast cancer. Some of those precise actions include inhibiting phase 1 and enhances phase 2 enzymes in the liver,^{53,54} reducing the formation of carcinogens,⁵⁵ causing tumor cell death,⁵⁶ slowing tumor cell division and growth,⁵⁷ blocking IL-6 (a substance in the immune system that causes cancer cells to grow faster),⁵⁸ inhibiting tumor invasion⁵⁹ and metastasis,⁶⁰ slowing down tumor angiogenesis by suppressing vascular endothelial growth factor (VEGF),⁶¹ decreasing the estrogenic effect of organo-chlorine pesticides,^{62,63} blocking the estrogen receptor,^{64,65} and down-regulating the estrogen receptor.⁶⁶ **Turmeric also improves the effectiveness of standard Western medical treatments.** Not only does it work synergistically with radiation to enhance tumor cell death,⁶⁷ but just like green tea, it also enhances the effectiveness of chemotherapy while protecting against the organ damage it can cause.⁶⁸ Interestingly, turmeric also has synergistic effects with green tea. **It enhances green tea's anticancer effects by 8 times and green tea enhances turmeric's anticancer effects by 3 times⁶⁹**

The Profound Impact of Simple Lifestyle Choices

In addition to foods and supplements, certain lifestyle choices also have enormous influence on the risk of breast cancer. For example, the number of hours and the timing of the hours that one sleeps impacts the risk of breast cancer by 50% or more. **Going to bed by 10 PM and getting up by 6 AM enhances normal diurnal hormonal fluctuations—**particularly of melatonin. Best known for its sleep-enhancing effects, melatonin also has many potent health-protecting properties including against breast cancer. In particular, it is a powerful antioxidant, and decreases the production of estrogen⁷⁰, as well as several other breast-cancer growth factors.⁷¹ Working the night shift causes the greatest disturbance in melatonin and the health consequences can be quite alarming. Studies show that women who work all night and sleep during the day have the lowest levels of melatonin and a 50% higher incidence of breast cancer.⁷²





Daily exercise is another lifestyle choice that can dramatically cut the risk of breast cancer.

Research shows that those who exercise aerobically three to five times a week for at least 30 minutes a day can reduce their risk by 20% to 50%.^{73,74} According to a study published May 25, 2005 in *Journal of the American Medical Association*,⁷⁵ **even a brisk half hour walk a day can significantly reduce the risk of dying in women with breast cancer.**

Chronic stress has extremely damaging effects on your body and according to the National Institute of Health, contributes to over 90% of all illnesses—mental and physical. Ancient systems of medicine including Traditional Chinese Medicine and Ayurveda, understood this and developed several effective stress-reducing techniques which train your nervous system to be less reactive to stress. Research shows these techniques, especially a form of meditation called **Transcendental Meditation**, are so effective at reducing the damaging effects of stress, if practiced daily, they can cut your risk of chronic disease in half.



Largely Preventable

Yes, there will always be those women who do everything right and still get the disease. But studies indicate that the incidence of this epidemic disease could potentially be reduced in the US (currently 141:100,000 in Caucasians) to at least that found in rural China or India where it is only 8:100,000. **The key is favoring the foods and lifestyle choices that protect against the disease and avoiding those that fuel it.** Through educating ourselves and our patients about the many research-proven natural approaches that protect against and fight breast cancer, breast cancer could become a rare disease.”



“It’s an old cliché but profound with truth: an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Research dollars for breast cancer go primarily to the investigation of new drugs and treatments. But the breast cancer epidemic will never be stopped if our focus stays on trying to fight it after the fact. It will only end with preventive measures. Research shows that breast cancer is a largely preventable disease.” Dr. Christine Horner



Summary of What to Favor and What to Avoid

Avoid

- Red Meat
- Saturated animal fats
- Sugar and refined carbohydrates
- Processed and packaged foods
- Alcohol
- Excess stress
- Staying up too late at night (past 10 PM)
- Sedentary lifestyle
- Being overweight or obese
- Smoking
- Exposure to toxins (building supplies, household cleaners, personal care products, and EMFs from electrical and wireless devices)
- Spending time with toxic people

Favor

- Plant-based diet: include a wide variety of organically grown fruits, vegetables, nuts, seed whole grains, spices and herbs.
- Superfoods: flax seeds, green tea, turmeric, garlic
- Nutritional Supplements: Vitamin D3, Protective Breast Formula (a combination of 7 different powerful breast-health nutrients), Brevail (flax seed lignans), omega-3 fatty acids
- Sleeping between 10 PM and 6 AM
- Keeping your weight ideal
- Daily exercise: at least 30 minutes of brisk walking a day
- Practicing gratitude
- Daily practice of an effective stress-reducing technique



Christine Horner, MD is a board certified and nationally recognized surgeon, author, expert in natural medicine, and a relentless champion for women's health. She spearheaded legislation in the 1990s that made it mandatory that insurance companies pay for breast reconstruction following mastectomy. She is the author of "Waking the Warrior Goddess: Dr Christine Horner's Program to Protect Against and Fight Breast Cancer", winner of the Independent Book Publishers Award 2006 for "Best Book in Health, Medicine, and Nutrition." and the author of the recently released "Radiant Health Ageless Beauty: Dr. Horner's 30-Day Program to Extraordinary Health and Longevity." For more information go to www.drchristinehorner.com



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