



The Anticancer Kitchen

by Wendy Fachon

There are many delicious, satisfying and nutritious foods that help defend the body against the invasion of cancer by reducing inflammation, detoxifying, boosting the immune system, inhibiting tumor growth and/or promoting the destruction of cancer cells.

Complex Carbohydrates – Cells require carbohydrates for energy production, for sure, however, carbs are better derived from complex carbohydrates (whole grains, whole fruits and whole vegetables) rather than simple carbohydrates. Complex carbohydrates take longer to absorb into the body and help stabilize blood sugar. This balancing of blood sugar helps moderate the secretion of insulin and insulin-like growth factor (IGF), both of which can cause inflammation and cancer cell growth. Fresh whole grains, whole fruits and whole vegetables contain fiber, vitamins, minerals and phytonutrients that promote healthy cell growth and body functioning.

Refined sugar and other simple carbohydrates, on the other hand, can sabotage an otherwise wholesome diet. David Servan-Schreiber, M.D., Ph.D. states, “Today, Western surveys of nutrition reveal that 56 percent of our calories come from three sources that were non-existent when our genes were developing: refined sugars (cane and beet sugar,

corn syrup, etc.); bleached flour (white bread, white pasta, etc.); and vegetable oils (soybean, sunflower, corn, trans fats). It so happens that these three sources contain none of the proteins, vitamins, minerals or omega-3 fatty acids needed to keep our bodies functioning. Instead, they directly fuel the growth of cancer.”

Proteins – The only category of food that provides nitrogen is protein. Nitrogen is essential to life; therefore, cells require protein to function. If there is a deficiency of protein, cancer cells will steal it from muscle. Wasting muscle accounts for a large part of the weight loss in cancer patients. It is important for cancer patients to consult with a nutritionist or naturopath to determine an adequate amount and type of protein to address the patient’s age, metabolism, body type and type of cancer. Processed meats are best avoided, as they contain nitrates and other chemical preservatives that are tied to colon cancer.

Oils – Every kitchen should be stocked with healthy oils, and every cook should know how to use them properly. Extra virgin olive oil, which has been shown to decrease the risk for colon and bowel cancer, is a good oil for cooking because it has a fairly high smoke point (405 degrees Fahrenheit) relative to other oils. Fat that has exceeded its smoke

point is no longer good for consumption. It is believed that smoking creates a large quantity of free radicals which contribute to the risk of cancer. Corn and sunflower oils, in particular, release toxic concentrations of chemicals called aldehydes during cooking, and leading scientists have linked frying with these vegetable oils to cancer.

Flaxseed oil has a nice fatty acid balance of Omega-3, Omega-6 and Omega-9, although cooking with such an oil is not recommended. Oils high in essential fatty acids are better used in salads or added to dishes after cooking. Flaxseed oil, and especially the seeds, has lignans, which have a protective effect against cancer, especially breast, uterine and prostate. The well-known Budwig Diet carefully blends flaxseed oil with cottage cheese to improve the body’s assimilation of the oil in treating cancer.

Coconut oil contains lauric acid, which being antimicrobial, antibacterial and antiviral, helps to support a cancer patient’s immune system. Dr. Joseph Mercola recommends avocado fat, which can wipe out the leukemia stem cells while leaving healthy cells unharmed. Avocados are also rich in cancer-fighting carotenoids, and avocado oil has the highest smoke point of any oil, making it the safest oil for high heat cooking. Oils can be added to complex carbohydrates such as cooked whole grains or cooked vegetables to enhance flavor, while also providing anticancer nutrition.

Whole Grains – Jonny Bowden, Ph.D., CNS, recommends oats, which are high in soluble fiber and contain avenanthramide, an antioxidant believed to have anti-inflammatory properties. Oatmeal has the highest protein content of any popular cereal, 8½ grams of protein in 2/3 cups of oats. Bowden also recommends quinoa, another high-protein seed, which contains more iron, calcium, phosphorus, magnesium, potassium, copper, manganese and zinc than wheat, barley or corn. Many of the phenolic substances identified in quinoa have the ability to inhibit angiogenesis (formation of new blood vessels from pre-existing blood vessels) and suppress the proliferation of cancer cells.

Whole Fruits – Berries contain ellagic acid and many other anti-cancer poly-

phenols. Peaches, plums and nectarines are also rich in anticancer elements. Organically raised fruits are preferred to conventionally produced, in order to avoid pesticide and herbicide toxicity. Strawberries, peaches and nectarines, in particular, are highly treated with pesticides, and it is best to buy them organic when possible.

Whole Vegetables – Cruciform vegetables such as cabbage, broccoli and cauliflower contain sulforaphane and indole-3-carbinols, which detoxify, prevent precancerous cells from developing into malignant tumors, promote apoptosis (programmed cell death) and block angiogenesis. Light steaming or quick stir frying are recommended to avoid destroying the anti-cancer phytonutrients. Cauliflower can be riced and topped with seasoned vegetables.

Orange vegetables, such as carrots, sweet potatoes and pumpkin contain vitamin A and lycopene, which inhibits the growth of cells in brain gliomas and other cancers. Other phytonutrients in these types of vegetables stimulate the growth of immune cells and improve their ability to attack tumor cells. Servan-Schreiber lists dark green vegetables, especially kale and spinach, as strong inhibitors of cancer cell growth.

Green juice drinks are a key component of the well-known Gerson Therapy nutritional program for cancer patients. This requires a juicer appliance, which will extract the nutrient-rich juice from a blend of leafy greens and fruits. For example, a flavorful juice can be derived from a blend of dandelion greens, spinach, cilantro, celery, cucumber and anti-inflammatory lemon, pineapple and ginger.

Vegetable Protein – Legumes are a good source of vegetable protein, and legumes have the ability to envelope tumor cells and prevent their growth. Peas, lentils or beans can be added to quinoa dishes or soups.

Liquid Protein – Bone broth is a good source of protein, nutrients, and minerals, including calcium, magnesium, silicon, phosphorus, sulfur, marrow and collagen, and bone broth supports a healthy immune system. Cancer patients that undergo surgery, chemotherapy and

radiation often experience a range of issues that impact eating. Bone broth is **easy to swallow and easily digested**. A warm cup of broth is very comforting. Broth can be used as a base for a soup of cancer-fighting vegetables and enhanced with herbs and spices for flavor and additional benefits. Making bone broth is a multi-step process that can be time-consuming. There are some excellent powdered bone broth products. Epigenetics GMO-free chicken “Bone Broth Protein” concentrate provides more than 22 grams of protein in one scoop, which makes one 12-ounce cup of broth and is available for purchase online.

Anticancer Seasonings – Current cancer prevention research targets non-toxic agents, such as herbs and spices, that can prevent or suppress the growth of cancer cells. Turmeric is considered the most powerful anti-inflammatory for countering cancer. It also stimulates apoptosis in cancer cells and inhibits angiogenesis. It’s imperative that turmeric be mixed with black pepper to be assimilated by the body. A combination of ¼ teaspoon of turmeric powder, 1 1/2 teaspoons of olive oil and a generous pinch of black pepper can be tossed with vegetables, grain dishes or salads of baby kale or spinach. Ginger is another powerful anti-inflammatory and inhibitor of angiogenesis. Fresh grated ginger can be combined with sesame oil to make a marinade for pasture-raised meat.

Cayenne (red) pepper contains capsaicin, a main constituent of hot chili peppers that has drawn a great deal of attention as a chemo-preventive agent against cancer. Investigators have shown that capsaicin modulates key signaling molecules in pathways tied to stress, cell

cycle and mitochondrial dysfunction.

Garlic is one of the oldest medicinal herbs. Garlic, onions and leeks promote apoptosis and regulate blood sugar levels, reducing insulin secretion. Garlic is more easily assimilated if crushed and combined with some oil.

Cinnamon has become a subject of cancer research. Two professors at the University of Arizona College of Pharmacy recently completed a study in which they proved that adding cinnamaldehyde, the compound that gives cinnamon its distinctive flavor and smell, to the diet of mice protected the mice against colorectal cancer. Responding to cinnamaldehyde, the cells had acquired detoxification and repair abilities that proved protective against exposure to a carcinogen.

Teas – Research studies have revealed green tea to be one of the best anti-cancer beverages. Green tea contains a polyphenol called epigallocatechin gallate (EGCG) that blocks angiogenesis. Lemon tea made by steeping lemon slices in hot water with a dash of cayenne pepper, and consumed a half hour before each meal, is also said to provide anticancer benefits. A ginger infusion helps alleviate nausea from chemotherapy or radiotherapy. Herbalists can recommend and provide tea blends to help support the immune, endocrine, adrenal, blood, lymphatic and nervous systems throughout the cancer treatment process.

A basic knowledge of anticancer nutrition strategies can empower people to boost immunity and improve resistance to the disease. Caregivers can combine anticancer ingredients in limitless ways to create meals that can be thoroughly enjoyed and perhaps improve the outcomes of conventional therapies. Friends who want to offer help to a family caring for a cancer patient can prepare a healthy soup and a salad, and arrange to deliver the meal at a convenient time.

Wendy Fachon is an experienced caregiver, an environmental educator and founder of Rhode Island Netwalking, which helps facilitate innovative walking programs for youth to improve their health and well-being. Learn more at NetWalking.com. See ad on page 33.

For people that want to learn more, here are three highly recommended books offering valuable information about anticancer foods:

Anticancer: A New Way of Life
by David Servan-Schreiber, M.D., Ph.D.

Beating Cancer with Nutrition
by Patrick Quillin, Ph.D., RD, CNS

The 150 Healthiest Foods on Earth
by Jonny Bowden, Ph.D., CNS