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## Nutrient Defense

by Micah Elconin, NE

If it hasn't already happened, it definitely will. You or someone close to you will be diagnosed with cancer. It's running rampant in our modern world. There's a laundry list of different explanations for this phenomena. However, with less expertise in medicine, pathology or the evolution of human biology, I'll focus on what I'm good at it. I'm a natural foods chef with specific training in therapeutic applications. I know how to nourish people who are sick.

There is much that can be done in the kitchen to support someone with cancer. The two most important elements of this program are the encouragement of cancer cell elimination in the human body as well as helping the body deal with the side affects of radiation therapy. As already said, I'm a chef first and foremost so I will focus on foods that can be included in meals and not nutritional supplements or medicinal herbs.

### Cancer Diet Basics

Cancer cells are crafty little buggers. When cancer develops in the body, tumors actually create their own super-highways to gain access to nutrients that one eats on a daily basis. It's an almost parasitic act. What this means is that what one eats can actually fuel the growth of tumors and cancerous cells in the body.

Now I know what you're thinking. I'm not going to suggest that the perfect cancer diet is a complete fast. However many medical professionals agree that the ingestion of too much protein (the building blocks for cells) can aggravate cancer. Basically, any protein that the body doesn't use for its own recovery and regeneration goes straight to the cancer cells for their own growth etc.

High fat diets can also aggravate cancer. Fat can stimulate the growth of cancer cells in much the same way as protein. In addition to this, a high fat diet can weaken the immune system and the body's ability to detoxify itself. As is usually the case with fat, the type of fats that are ingested is as important, if not more, than the total amount of fat ingested.



**Above:** Raspberries contain ellagic acid, a compound that can actually reverse tumor growth.

It is important to keep the ratio of omega 3 to omega 6 fatty acids in a proper range. When too much omega 6 (sunflower, safflower, soy, grapeseed, and corn oil) is consumed the body produces the pro inflammatory prostaglandin E2. PGE2 not only encourages inflammation in the body, but it inhibits the ability of macrophages and natural killer cells to do their job, which includes killing off cancer cells. By reducing the amount of omega 6 in the diet and, more importantly, including ample amounts of omega 3 (coldwater fish, flax, hemp, walnut, and green algae) the body will produce less PGE2 and thus fight off cancer cells more efficiently.

A vegetarian diet is best while fighting cancer. By keeping animal protein in the diet to a minimum one is able to keep their protein intake at a moderate level as well as emphasizing plant foods which more often than not are easier for the body to digest and packed full of healing power. Any burden that can be taken off of the body will allow it to fight back against cancer as well as the radiation therapy used to destroy the cancerous cells. An additional benefit of avoiding animal products is that one will be exposed to less of the hormones and drugs given to animals (most of these drugs are stored in fatty tissues) which promote cancer to develop in the body in the first place. It's a constant balancing act. The body needs protein and fats to heal, but too much creates problems.

## Anti Cancer Foods

### Cruciferous Vegetables

These vegetables fight cancer through many different avenues. They all contain an assortment of phytochemicals including isothiocyanates and indole 3 carbinol. The former stimulates the production of cancer destroying enzymes while the latter regulates sex hormone production which is a huge factor in the progression of prostate, ovarian and breast cancers. Cruciferous vegetables include broccoli, cauliflower, brussel sprouts, kale, mustard greens, watercress, and collard greens.

### Mushrooms

People often forget that mushrooms are not plants or animals, but an entirely different form of life (funguses). Their dramatically different biology ends up offering up a wide variety of health boosting properties. More often than not, mushrooms accomplish this by stimulating the body's natural response to illness and weakness. Many of the most potent medicinal mushrooms are not readily available. However, shiitakes, one of the most potent (and flavorful), are easy to obtain in fresh or dried form. A variety of chemicals in shiitakes encourage the body to eliminate tumors. They are also the source for two new breakthrough anticancer drugs that are being used in Japan. Other potent mushrooms include maitake, reishi, royal trumpet, and oyster mushrooms.

### Red Berries

These berries, most notably raspberries contain a compound called ellagic acid, which is a very effective anti cancer nutrient. Ellagic acid attacks cancer through its ability to activate detoxifying enzymes, preventing the binding of carcinogens to cellular DNA, and stimulating apoptosis (programmed cell death). Not only can it prevent cancer, but many studies have shown that it has the ability to reverse tumor growth. Other good red berries to

eat are strawberries and cranberries, but ellagic acid is also been found in walnuts and pecans.

### Legumes

Beans contain compounds known as protease inhibitors. As the name suggests, these chemicals block the action of protease, an enzyme which aids in the metabolism of proteins. At first glance this would seem to be useless. However scientists have discovered that protease inhibitors also seem to block cancer promoting agents from initiating cell mutation. Some studies have also shown that protease inhibitors can actually "reprogram" cancer cells back to their original healthy state.



**Above:** Raw garlic is not only strong flavored, but full of immune boosting nutrients.

### Alliums

The healing affect of these vegetables is widely known. Garlic, onions, shallots, scallions and leeks all contain organic sulfur compounds that have tremendous immune boosting affects. Not only are they anti viral and anti bacterial, but new research suggests that they also inhibit carcinogenesis.



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# A Happy Healthy Heart

by Claudia Brachtl, L. Ac, Clinical Ayurvedic Specialist

Ayurveda considers the heart to be the most precious organ and the seat of human consciousness. The soul is said to be a jewel that resides deep in the lotus, which represents the heart. The lotus petals need to be open in order for light to come in and make the jewel shine. How we feel in our heart is how we connect to the world. When our emotions are healthy and stable our heart will thrive. Heart diseases reflect the deep-seated issues of identity, emotions and consciousness. Emotional problems play a key role in heart disease and should always be considered when treating heart disease.

The western lifestyle is hazardous to the heart. The emphasis on personal achievement, materialism and consumerism leads to emotional and spiritual starvation. The Western diet is loaded with sugar, fat, processed foods, and fast food. Such a diet in combination with a sedentary lifestyle, lack of exercise, suppressed emotions, and excess stress and anxiety, is a huge part of the cause for the high incidence of heart disease in the West.



**Above:** *Pranayama is an ancient art form that has tremendous health benefits.*

Emotional causes play a very important role in heart diseases according to Ayurveda. Emotional imbalances can arise when we are not in touch with our hearts on a deep level, or when we are insensitive to the emotional needs of others.

Other factors for various heart disorders include excessive exercise, lack of exercise, a diet high in fat or sugar, obesity, stress, fear, and anxiety.

## General Ayurvedic Recommendations for a Healthy Heart

### Walking

Walking is excellent exercise for everyone and excellent therapy as well. The early morning is ideal for taking a 30-minute walk. It will not only help the heart, but it prepares one for the day by charging up the circulation and metabolism.

### Pranayama

Conscious breathing, as in *pranayama*, is an effective means of taking care of the heart. Practice of *pranayama* or breathing exercises directly affects the functioning of the cardiopulmonary system. Breath control in *pranayama* strengthens heart muscles and improves the oxygen carrying capacity of the blood vessels.

### Ayurvedic Massages

Ayurvedic massages with warm vata pacifying oils melt away aches and pains, improve circulation and general body tone, relieve mental and physical fatigue, and reduce blood pressure and heart rate. For me, regular massages are not only a treat, they are a necessity! I also religiously do the Ayurvedic warm oil self-massage (*abhyanga*) before taking a warm bath or shower, which is a great way to finish the day.

### A Fresh, Wholesome Diet

One can make their diet more heart-healthy by eating lots of fresh fruits, whole grains and vegetables. Try dressing your veggies with fresh lime juice and by using heart-friendly spices such as fresh-ground black pepper and the antioxidant power-spice turmeric. Choose fresh foods over processed foods or leftovers, and lighter foods over rich foods. Some western nutritionists recommend the same diet, for instance a raw food diet, for everyone. Ayurveda, on the other hand, recommends different foods for different constitutions. Consult with a certified Ayurvedic practitioner to find out which foods are detrimental to your health and which foods could actually aid the natural cleansing and healing processes within the body based on your individual constitution.

### Rest

When was the last time you had a vacation? In Europe six

weeks of paid vacation time are the norm while in the US we are lucky when we get two weeks. We need time for ourselves, time for simply doing nothing, time for day-dreaming. We need to be far away from computers and cell phones on a regular basis. Our bodies can only heal and rejuvenate when we give them time to rest.

### Yoga

New research shows that people who practice yoga and meditation at least three times a week may reduce their blood pressure, pulse, and most importantly, their risk of heart disease.

### Aroma Therapy

Roses have been the ideal gift to express love and forgiveness for thousands of years. They literally soothe the heart and emotions. Rose oil regulates heart palpitations, reduces blood pressure and enhances blood circulation. On the emotional level rose oil has a calming effect for grief, anger, depression, stress and resentment. Massaging a few drops of high quality rose oil into the center of the palms, soles of the feet and the center of the sternum reduces sadness, confusion, or frustration, and will help promote sleep.

A traditional preparation using the rose is rose petal jam, made by cooking rose petals and sugar (or it can be bought online from [www.mapi.com](http://www.mapi.com)). Eaten straight from the jar, or made into a drink with milk or fresh yogurt and water, rose petal jam has a cooling, soothing effect on the mind and body.

### Meditation

Meditation is one of the best ways to relax, dissolve stress and allow the body to heal. Meditating for 10 to 20 minutes twice a day can have dramatic healing effects on one's heart.

### Panchakarma

Arterial plaque is toxic matter (*ama*) that builds up in the blood vessels because the body cannot get rid of it efficiently. Ayurveda recommends a program of internal cleansing (*Panchakarma*) with every change of season to help the body flush out *ama*.

*Panchakarma* cleanses and nourishes the body, mind and soul on many levels. It is very good for the heart. A study researched the effects of a three-to-five-day *panchakarma* cleanse with the following results: Three months later test subjects total cholesterol had dropped acutely, HDL (the good cholesterol) rose 7.5 %, free radical damage fell significantly, blood pressure dropped, and problems with anxiety improved. Vasoactive intestinal

peptide, which is a coronary vasodilator, increased substantially. These findings confirm the efficacy of *panchakarma* for cardiovascular health.

### Copper Water

Ayurvedic practitioners believe that drinking water purified by keeping it over night in a copper vessel will help prevent arteriosclerosis.

## Ayurvedic Herbs

### Arjuna

According to Ayurvedic texts this herb was created by the gods to help the famous warrior Arjuna make a difficult decision. A great restorative, Arjuna soothes both the physical and emotional heart. Take ½ teaspoon 3 times a day with honey and warm water. Arjuna is a coronary vasodilator, it protects the heart, strengthens circulation, and helps maintain tone and health of the heart muscle.

**Ashwagandha** is another powerful rasayana (rejuvenative tonic) that sweeps away stress and ensures good sleep, thereby healing an overworked heart. Ashwagandha slows down the circulation of adrenaline, the stress hormone that can literally cause wear and tear on the heart muscle. Ashwagandha reduces blood cortisol, which impairs heart health.

### Ginger

Make fresh ginger tea by boiling a little grated or sliced ginger in a cup or two of water, or grate a little ginger and add it to rice or soup. Eating a little bit of ginger every day can help to prevent heart disease.

Ayurveda believes in prevention, as well as a holistic approach to healing. Spend time everyday doing things that encourage contentment and happiness. Listen to soothing or uplifting music, enjoy serene natural beauty, practice uplifting aromatherapy, sip relaxing herbal teas, enjoy the company of good friends. Try to minimize rush in your life, take your time, don't gossip or criticize others, maintain a positive attitude, and walk away from stressful situations.



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# Genetics and Fitness

by Erica Colvin

Do you ever feel overwhelmed? Just today as I stood in line at the grocery store every magazine, newspaper, and advertisement displayed a message stating, “Lose 20 pounds in 20 Days”, or “Shrink Three Sizes Fast”, or “New Raw Food Diet Gets Results”. Do you have a hard time taking them seriously? I sure do.

## Assumptions

The one fallacy that is constantly thrown out is genetics. We have been told countless times about metabolism and aging. It’s a well known fact that as we age our metabolism slows down. With a slower metabolism we gain weight and have a harder time getting it back off. If it is out of our control what are we supposed to do? Can you really fight genetics?

## Facts

The truth is the average person gains one percent body fat per decade due to the general decline in metabolism. A 10 year old girl should have about 19 percent body fat, a 20 year old 20 percent, 30 year old 21 percent, 40 year old 22 percent, and 50-80 year olds should stay around 23 percent. The problem is that the average 20 year old is at a 24 percent body fat. She is already over the healthy point. For men, the starting percentage at the age of 20 should be 18 percent.

Unfortunately, we use genetics as an excuse. Christmas time comes around and we are happy when we only gain 2-3 lbs instead of the anticipated 10-12 that accompany the holidays. Wrong. The reality is 2-3 lbs is average and definitely not good. It’s time to fix a few things.

January hits and we panic when we step back onto the scale. We buy the magazines on the grocery store racks, we hit the gym hard core. For the first six weeks we are doing great. We workout for a good 45-60 minutes a day, five days a week. This feels good, I am accomplishing my resolutions! The problem is after the first six weeks we are not noticing a huge difference on the scale. Plus, we are getting tired of the rigorous schedule. We decide to drop it down to twice a week, after a couple weeks still no results. Finally, the genetics rumor is starting to sound like a lock and chain that we can’t escape, and we give up altogether.

## Solution

“What we need to start focusing on is the difference between hardcore workouts and longevity in health,” says Matt Hackney, CEO of MOV Fitness, Santa Barbara, Calif. and a Nutrition and Fitness expert. “Moderation is the key

to long term success. People think that workouts are what burn calories. If you work out for 30 minutes it will burn 300 calories. But if you develop a smart workout you could be burning calories for the next 48 hrs.”



**Above:** Aerobic activity burns calories, but interval training boosts metabolism.

Matt suggests a method called interval training. Try the treadmill- jog until you feel out of breath, then walk for a couple minutes, jog again. Eventually you will get up to sprinting, then walking, sprint again, then walk. “What we want to accomplish is a good butt-kicking. When we embrace interval training it will keep our body burning calories for the rest of the day. A good workout can keep you burning off your next three meals. Do this two or three times a week, eat a balanced diet and you will see stability in your health.”

Instead of watching the calorie counter on the treadmill, Matt suggests giving 100% effort for one minute and then taking a three minute break. After 5-6 sets of this, you will be exhausted, yet have only burnt about 200 calories. While this is less than the 300 calories burnt in our normal routine, you will actually end up burning an extra 300 throughout the next 48 hours. Overall, this approach burns more calories and over a longer period of time.

Erica Colvin is a Fitness and Nutrition Consultant for MOV Fitness, headquartered in Santa Barbara, CA. Erica is a freelance writer and editor for several national magazines. She also instructs ballroom and salsa dancing, and competes in her spare time. She can be reached at [erica@movfitness.com](mailto:erica@movfitness.com), or [www.movfitness.com](http://www.movfitness.com).