

TOPICS IN WELLNESS

Volume 4, Issue 1

May 2004

Ask your Wellness Store Pharmacist about...

Breast Cancer: Supporting your Hormonal Health

Dear Mike,

I am concerned about breast cancer and wondered if there were any natural methods to safeguard my body. Got any tips?

Sheila J., New Orleans

Dear Sheila,

Thank you so much for writing. This is such an important topic and it merits a complete issue at least of the Wellness Topics.

This question comes up a great deal at the Wellness Store, and with good reason. Each year, 182,000 women are diagnosed with breast cancer and 43,300 die. One woman in eight either has or will develop breast cancer in her lifetime. In addition, 1,600 men will be diagnosed with breast cancer and 400 will die this year.

If detected early, the five-year survival rate exceeds 95%. Mammograms are among the best early detection methods, yet 13 million U.S. women 40 years of age or older have never had a mammogram.

The National Cancer Institute and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services recommend that women in their forties and older have mammograms every one to two years. A complete early detection plan also includes regular clinical breast examinations by a trained medical professional. Monthly breast self-exams are suggested in addition.

Breast cancer, or the fear of breast cancer, can be so overwhelming that it becomes difficult to have rational discussions or take appropriate, sensible action. In addition, with all of the diagnostic procedures and therapies that are available, deciding which type of medicine or treatment is best for a specific illness or problem can be confusing and difficult. And, helping people you love be active and informed consumers of health care can be equally frustrating, especially when they are wary of traditional medical practices.

Once a suspicious mass (e.g., a breast lump) has been identified and benign explanations (such as cysts, infections, or calcium deposits) have been ruled out, a biopsy is needed to determine if the lump is cancerous. *A biopsy is the only definitive way to diagnose breast cancer.*

The good news is that most lumps that women find in their breasts are *not* cancerous — they are usually fibro-cystic masses or cysts (fluid filled sacs), both of which are benign. A *new* lump or mass in the breast or underarm region *is* the most common sign of breast cancer. Cancerous lumps are most often hard, painless, and have asymmetrical borders, but *all* lumps found in or around the breast need further evaluation by a health care professional. Breast lumps can be evaluated in a few ways, including diagnostic mammography, breast ultrasound or a biopsy.

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Traditional Western medicine practices, such as radiation and immuno- and chemotherapies, have been demonstrated in clinical research to offer the best chances of long-term survival to people with cancer. Many people with cancer, however, are turning to *complementary* therapies, alternative treatments used in *conjunction with* more traditional medicine, to minimize the side effects of treatment, relieve stress, and help maintain a positive attitude.

Deodorant: Fact or fiction regarding toxins and the risk of contracting breast cancer

It may not be just what you eat, but what you put on your skin, that may help in prevention of breast cancer. Certain shampoos and deodorants are now considered suspects in the formation of breast cancer. But, how much truth is there to this assumption?

According to mainstream medical knowledge, there is no existing evidence to substantiate the idea that antiperspirant use is linked with the development of breast cancer. There are two main reasons why this proposal is false. First, there is the suggestion that there is a buildup of "toxins," inhibited from leaving the body due to antiperspirant use, which is responsible for the abnormal cell growth of cancer. Breast cancer is not caused by a buildup of toxins in the body.

In addition, the purpose of sweating is **not** to rid the body of "toxins." Rather, perspiring helps the body to regulate its temperature. Sweat is made up mostly of water and salt, as well as other natural substances that get carried along on the ride. It is the liver and kidneys that are responsible for ridding the body of unwanted chemicals.

Also, even if antiperspirants stopped **all** sweating in the armpit area (which they don't), the body would continue expelling sweat and regulating temperature through the soles of the feet, hands, forehead, and most other areas.

Second, a lot of research has been done on the factors that seem to be related to the development of breast cancer. The use of antiperspirants has never been identified as one of these factors.

The two most significant risk factors are being female and aging. Other characteristics that may raise one's risk of breast cancer are:

- A personal or close familial history of breast or ovarian cancer
- Early onset of menstruation (before age 12)
- Menopause starting after age 55
- Giving birth to a child after the age of 30, or not having children at all
- Any signs of abnormal cell growth in the breast, as seen through a biopsy

Although there are self-care and lifestyle choices that seem to have an impact on whether or not individuals develop cancer, early detection and treatment are the best tools currently available in the fight against this often-devastating disease.

Prevention: Safeguarding your Body against Hormonal Cancers

Substances in plants could help improve health or protect against disease. Some are vitamins or minerals, but more diverse are plant chemicals (a.k.a. phytochemicals). These substances impart distinct flavors, aromas, and pigments to foods.

For example, one enormous class of antioxidants, flavonoids, includes a group of antioxidants named allyl sulfides, which are found in garlic, onions, and shallots. All of these contain a distinctive taste and smell. It's believed that allyl sulfides may help in the production of a detoxification enzyme that protects against carcinogens.

Other antioxidants are detectable by their colors — and vividly colored fruits and veggies are rich sources of beneficial plant chemicals.

Anthocyanins are antioxidants that impart the deep red, blue, and purple colors to raspberries, blueberries, eggplant, and red cabbage, among others. Include at least five servings of fruits and veggies a day. If you're already doing this, aim for even more. Researchers have found that 5 - 9 servings per day are most beneficial.

To obtain the benefits of the myriad substances in nature, try to vary your selections from day to day, and from week to week.

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Include something red, yellow, green, orange, blue, purple, brown, and white. This may help you to achieve a more diverse, inclusive, and colorful eating plan!

The connection between diet and breast cancer is not as clear as some of the connections between diet and other cancers. A majority of the studies in this area show a relationship between a high fat diet and the increased risk for developing breast cancer. A recent Harvard University study reported differing results. After studying over 335,000 women, they found a low fat diet to be no more protective than the typical American diet of over 30% fat. The conflicting evidence in this area continues to confuse the medical and scientific communities as well as the general public.

One sensible proposal may be that the fat in the American diet contributes to a high caloric intake, which together may increase the risk for developing breast cancer. Lowering fat AND calories while increasing fiber may be the most healthful changes the public can make.

Estrogen and the risk of Breast Cancer

In recent years there has been considerable interest in the effects of estrogen exposure on hormone-related diseases including breast, cancer. Excessive estrogen, whether endogenous (from within the body) or exogenous (originating outside the body), is being studied in women. Optimizing estrogen metabolism with dietary changes, nutritional supplements and exercise, has proven to be extremely beneficial in cancer prevention.

One area of dietary influence is in a class of cruciferous vegetables known as brassica, which contain a substance called indoles.

Indole 3 Carbinol (I3C) has been investigated for its effects on estrogen metabolism as well as its chemopreventive and tumor suppressing properties. Various researchers suggest that Indole 3 Carbinol (I3C) exhibits potent antitumor activity by regulating estrogen activity and metabolism.

Many women have an added risk of cancer and therefore may need to add protection to their health regimen. For this reason, we highly recommend the nutritional product known as Indole Plus. Indole Plus provides the clinically recommended amount of Indole-3-Carbinol with a unique delivery system that maximizes the absorption and utilization of I3C.

Indole-3-Carbinol is a natural constituent of vegetables of the Brassica genus (cauliflower, broccoli, brussel sprouts). Indole Plus features a proprietary delivery system that creates a favorable pH environment at the receptor sites to increase uptake of I3C. It is one of the best products on the market today to influence estrogen behavior.

Sheila, many women will thank you for your letter and hopefully, we were able to help with some suggestions of prevention from that terrible scourge of modern life, breast cancer.

For more information about all the methods of safeguarding your breasts (and body) health, stop by the Wellness Store today. And thanks for writina!

May is a great month for "weighing in" on your health. Call today for an appointment for weight management suggestions with our pharmacist, Mike Casso. Or click on our website at www.thewellnessstore.com and e-mail us for an appointment. While you are there, look around. There is a lot of good information about your health and many of the fine products we stock. Can't make it in? Just place your order online. We will have it to you **FAST!**

TOPICS IN WELLNESS

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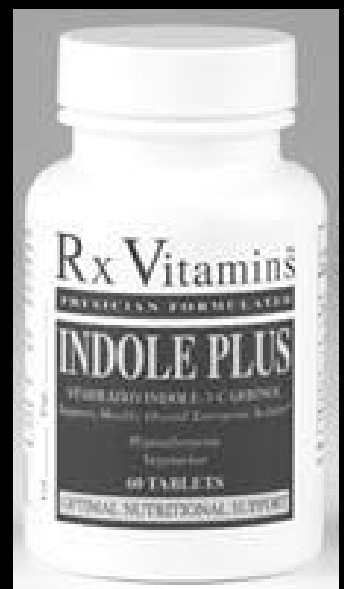
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Concerns about hormonal health bothering you or your loved one? We understand. Breast cancer and prostate cancer are simply rampant in today's society. Now more than ever, it is important to safeguard your health with good nutrition.

For a targeted approach to supporting your body against hormonal issues*, stop by for Indole Plus from Rx Vitamins.



*These statements have not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration. This product is not meant to diagnose, prevent, treat or cure any disease.