



Touch of Courage

. Connection

Cedar Valley Breast Cancer Task Force

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Diet and Breast Cancer by Michelle Busch, RD, LD

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What dietary factors can influence a woman's risk of developing breast cancer or surviving that diagnosis? Much media attention has been directed at examining how diet can affect cancer risk. Some of the information you read may seem to be contradictory. One study says that fat increases breast cancer risk and another says it decreases risk. It is important to look at the big picture when interpreting research. What does the preponderance of the evidence suggest? One or two studies will not provide adequate information upon which to base lifestyle decisions on.

Information also evolves over time as we learn more. That fat controversy mentioned earlier has gone from fat as the culprit to total caloric intake. Total caloric intake in some studies was a stronger determinant of breast cancer than dietary fat. Obesity and gaining weight during adulthood are also risk factors. Research is continuing in this area to determine how different types of fat may affect breast cancer risk. At this time, the best recommendation is to try to achieve and maintain a healthy weight and to keep total fat intake to around 30% of total calories. Choose "heart healthy" oils such as olive and canola oil. These fats may also affect cancer risk, not just your heart.

Alcohol consumption is another known risk factor for breast cancer.

The risk increases as the amount of alcohol consumed increases. There is a weak association between alcohol consumption and breast cancer in women who drink one alcoholic beverage a day. Drinking more, about two to five drinks per day, may be associated with a rate of breast cancer that is about 40% higher than the rate for non-drinkers. And wine is not any better than beer or hard liquor. The 1996 Guidelines on Diet Nutrition and Cancer Prevention from the American Cancer Society suggest that most adults can drink, but they should limit their intake.

As much as 30% of breast cancer risk has been linked to the way we eat. Dietary changes to eat more fruits and vegetables may provide women with an easy way to reduce their risk of developing breast cancer. Most of the studies report that the consumption of vegetables may provide women with an easy way to reduce their risk of developing breast cancer. Most of the studies report that the consumption of vegetables is more strongly linked to breast cancer risk reduction than the consumption of fruits. Specifically, there is strong evidence for carrots and other yellow-orange vegetables such as squash and sweet potatoes, as well as dark green vegetables like broccoli and spinach. In one recent study, the consumption of more than five servings per day of vegetables versus less than three

Diet and Breast Cancer (continued)

servings per day was associated with a 54% reduction in the breast cancer rate. It is not that difficult to eat five or more servings a day once you know what counts as a serving. A serving is: 1 piece of fresh fruit, ¾ cup of 100% fruit juice, ½ cup of cooked vegetables or canned fruit, 1 cup of leafy vegetables or salad, 1 handful of dried fruit, or ½ cup dried peas or beans.

The jury is still out on how meat consumption might affect breast cancer risk. Fish has no association with breast cancer risk. High protein diets are currently very popular to lose weight. Many experts are concerned with this dietary trend as high protein, low carbohydrate diets are low in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. All are foods that have been shown repeatedly to reduce cancer risk.

Many women believe that soy consumption reduces breast cancer risk. A concern with soy is that studies of women eating soy products daily have shown that soy foods can act like estrogen and cause cell proliferation in the breast. This could have a negative effect on breast cancer survival. Phyto-estrogens in soy have also been reported to both oppose and complement the effects of tamoxifen in breast cancer cells. More study is needed in this area. For now it is advised to avoid soy supplements and use soy foods in moderation. While there is a wealth of evidence that consuming more fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and even soy decreased the risk of developing cancer, there is not enough evidence to support taking any type of supplement. Some may even be harmful.

Don't forget physical activity! New research is emerging showing that exercising can reduce the risk of cancer development. The best information at this time to reduce your risk of developing breast cancer is to increase your fruit and vegetable consumption, decrease or avoid alcohol intake, and try to exercise most days of the week.

Reach to Recovery – Volunteer Training!

This year an estimated 2,400 women will be diagnosed with breast cancer. Breast cancer survivors have a unique opportunity to help other women through their breast cancer journey. The American Cancer Society would like to invite breast cancer survivors that are one year out of treatment to become American Cancer Society Reach to Recovery volunteers.

Reach to Recovery is a one-to-one support program for women facing or living with breast cancer. The program brings together specially trained breast cancer survivors with other women who need information and support before, during and after their breast cancer treatment.

Reach to Recovery volunteers are breast cancer survivors who are trained by the American Cancer Society. Volunteers visit with individuals facing breast cancer to provide them with support and information. The meetings are arranged through local American Cancer Society offices and may be requested by the patient or the health care team. Reach to Recovery support and materials are always provided at no charge.

A Reach to Recovery Volunteer Visitor training was held on March 25, 2004 at Covenant Cancer Treatment Center. Six women were

re-certified as Reach to Recovery volunteers and three women were newly certified as volunteers!

If you are a breast cancer survivor who would like to be part of this one-on-one support program, please contact Susan Francis, Survivorship Coordinator at 1-800-ACS-2345 or email at susan.francis@cancer.org for further information.

The American Cancer society is the nationwide community-based voluntary health organization dedicated to eliminating cancer as a major health problem by preventing cancer, saving lives and diminishing suffering from cancer through research, education, advocacy and service.

2004 Breast Cancer and Women's Health Conference

The third annual Breast Cancer and Women's Health Conference organized by Longaberger Basket Consultant, Heather Burgett will be on Monday, August 30, 2004.

The event will be held at the PIPAC Center on the Lake in the Cedar Falls Industrial Park from 4:30 to 9:00. You can e-mail Heather at hburgett@usa.net for information. Information will arrive in July. Registration is limited.



A Survivor's Story

By Christine Carpenter

Breast cancer at age 45 came as a shock. With no family history and a model of good health and habits I wondered how this could happen to me? Both physical and emotional healing have taken years and, still there is not a day goes by I don't fear a future recurrence. Ten years later I continue to take many paths toward healing. One of the many paths is wellness and another is breast cancer advocacy.

The path toward personal wellness began during chemotherapy when I consulted with a dietitian to become an ova-lacto (eggs and dairy) vegetarian. About a year later, after reading Michael Lerner's book, *Choices in Healing: Integrating the Best of Conventional and Complementary Approaches to Cancer*, I decided to consult with Dr. Keith Block of Evanston, Illinois.

Dr. Block specializes in a holistic health approach and prescribes a modified macrobiotic diet, meditation, exercise and dietary supplements. The modified macrobiotic diet prescribed for me consists of eating the following daily: 12 whole grain servings (i.e. brown rice, quinoa, whole oat groats, etc.), 6 vegetable servings (2 below ground, 2 cruciferous and 2 leafy green), 2 fruits, 2-3 protein servings (protein from ocean fish, legumes, and soy products), no dairy products, and no sugars. To sweeten foods, the diet allows maple syrup, brown rice syrup and malt barley.

Upon returning to Iowa I followed the diet, learned to meditate and continued my daily two mile walks with an aerobic and strength

training class two times per week. Keeping my oncologist and internist completely informed, I purchased and took the dietary supplements Dr. Block prescribed and sold. From the beginning I was skeptical about the supplements because I had to purchase them exclusively from Dr. Block. After taking the supplements for about a year, I became uneasy about the amount I was taking and the huge expense. I quit taking the supplements but continued the diet, meditation, and exercise. After two years I stopped meditating because I disliked it and found a long walk, in the outdoors, made me happy and content and better served my personal style. Nine years later I continue my diet and exercise program.

Why do I continue the diet and exercise? It is not because I think it will prevent cancer or a recurrence. I continue both because: 1) I no longer have after lunch and after supper slumps where I feel tired and sleepy; 2) I am able to eat enormous amounts of food and not gain weight; and 3) I seem to have more resistance to colds and flu. So, I follow the diet and exercise to feel good and enjoy today.

Another path to healing is breast cancer advocacy. I joined the National Breast Cancer Coalition (NBCC) and within a year was NBCC's lead Iowa field coordinator. I founded Iowa Breast Cancer Edu-action, the local advocacy organization which brings you the *Iowa Breast Cancer Resource Guide-2004* and the Serbo-Croatian translation of the American Cancer Society booklet, *For Women Facing Breast Cancer*. Yearly I fly to Washington DC to lobby for NBCC's priorities in hopes we figure out what in the environment - personal and social - is causing cancer and [then work

toward] creating policy changes to eliminate those causes.

Touch of Courage Breast Cancer Support Group

The Touch of Courage Breast Cancer Support Group continues to meet on the first Monday of every month (unless it's a holiday), with the meetings being held at Covenant Cancer Treatment Center at 200 E. Ridgeway Avenue in Waterloo at 1:30 and 5:30 p.m.

For those of you who are long term survivors, please remember what a critical role you play in the journey of the newly diagnosed.

The Support Group invites any woman or man who is dealing with breast cancer to attend the support group meetings. Spouses and significant others are also welcome.

Medicare Patients are not Taking Advantage of Mammography Benefit

Mammography is one of the few screening exams that Medicare does cover, yet only 52.7% of Iowa women on Medicare take advantage of this benefit. In Black Hawk County compliance rate is slightly greater at 60.8%.

The Iowa Foundation for Medical Care is teaming up with Iowa physicians to increase mammography screening among Medicare recipients. "Many women in Iowa are unnecessarily putting themselves at risk by not getting regular mammograms," according to Mike Speight of the Iowa Foundation for Medical Care.

Four Local Breast Cancer Activists Head to Washington, D.C. Demonstrating the Importance of Grassroots Advocacy in the Fight to End Breast Cancer

On Tuesday, May 4, 2004, in the nation's capitol, Christine Carpenter and Sue Witwer (Cedar Falls) and Deanna Hughes and Cindy Harris (Waterloo) from the Cedar Valley Breast Cancer Task Force joined breast cancer advocates from across the country to lobby Representatives Nussle, Latham, Boswell, King, Leach and Senators Tom Harkin and Charles Grassley on the National Breast Cancer Coalition (NBCC) legislative priorities.



Dee Hughes, Cindy Harris, Sue Witwer and Christine Carpenter in Washington, D.C. on Lobby

Following three days of extensive advocacy training, members of the Cedar Valley Breast Cancer Task Force joined hundreds of breast cancer survivors and activists fighting to eradicate this deadly disease and to discuss breast cancer public policy issues with their elected representatives on Capitol Hill.

The Annual Lobby Day is a part of the National Breast Cancer Coalition Fund Annual Advocacy Training Conference held in Washington, D.C. At this year's conference, held May 1-5, 2004, hundreds of dedicated individuals from across the country learned about the latest in breast cancer research and science, explored emerging issues in public policy and medical practice, and built and strengthened their political advocacy skills. Leading experts from scientific and research fields discussed and debated new and often

controversial issues in the struggle to diagnose, treat, cure, and ultimately end breast cancer.

“Almost everyone is sympathetic to the cause of breast cancer. But we need more than sympathy to end the disease. All politicians must be held accountable for their action, or inaction, on substantive breast cancer policy that will make a real difference,” stated Breast Cancer Task Force member, Christine Carpenter. “While both Senators Harkin and Grassley have been supportive of the Breast and Cervical Cancer Treatment Act, we still have much more work to do on the federal and state levels. We must continue our activism until women no longer fear this devastating disease.”

This is the eighth time members of the Cedar Valley Breast Cancer Task Force have participated in NBCC's Lobby Day and met with Members of Congress to discuss substantive breast cancer public policy issues. The National Breast Cancer Coalition is a grassroots organization dedicated to ending breast cancer through the power of action and advocacy. NBCC has more than 600 member organizations and 70,000 individual members.



Senator Harkin was honored by the NBCC for his dedication to Breast Cancer legislation at a reception

The Cedar Valley Breast Cancer Task Force is hoping more individuals from our area, as well as other parts of the state, will attend next year's conference. More information is available on the National Breast Cancer Coalition's web site at www.stopbreastcancer.org.

NBCC 2004 Priorities

The National Breast Cancer Coalition's (NBCC) priorities for 2004 are:

- 1) Access to quality healthcare for all.
- 2) \$150 million appropriation for the Department of Defense peer-reviewed Breast Cancer Research Program funding.
- 3) Passage of legislation that would authorize funding for the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences to research links between breast cancer and the environment.
- 4) Passage of legislation prohibiting health insurance and employment discrimination based on genetic information.
- 5) Passage of legislation prohibiting health insurance and employment discrimination based on genetic information.

The DOD Peer-Reviewed Breast Cancer Research Program is a \$150 million appropriation, level funding, for the Department of Defense (DOD) Peer-Reviewed Breast Cancer Research Program (BCRP) for fiscal year (FY) 2005.

Enactment of S. 983/H.R. 1746, the bipartisan Breast Cancer and Environmental Research Act, would make grants for multi-institutional, multi-disciplinary research centers to study potential links between the environment and breast cancer. It is generally believed that the environment plays a role in the development of breast cancer, but the extent of that role is not understood. The NBCC believes that this critical issue must be approached thoughtfully and methodically and that a national strategy for increasing knowledge in this area must be developed.

Enactment of H.R.1910, the Genetic Nondiscrimination in Health Insurance and Employment Act, has strong enforcement mechanisms that include a right to sue and would prohibit health insurers and employers from discriminating based on genetic information.

Iowa Legislators' Voting Record on these Acts

State	Member	DoD Letter FY 05	Environmental Act HR 1746/S983	Genetic Nondiscrimination HR 1910
IA	Sen. Charles E. Grassley (R)	X	X	
IA	Sen. Tom Harkin (D)	X	X	
IA	Rep. Jim Nussle (R-01)	X	X	
IA	Rep. James A. Leach (R-02)	X	X	X
IA	Rep. Leonard Boswell (D-03)	X	X	X
IA	Rep. Tom Latham (R-04)	X	X	X
IA	Rep. Steven A. King (R-05)	X	X	
NV = did not vote Member of Congress either was not present for the vote or is a non-voting member.		NA = not applicable Member of Congress could not take action on this item because it was only available to Members in the other chamber of Congress.		

Relay for Life

For the third year, The Cedar Valley Breast Cancer Task Force has sponsored a team for the American Cancer Society Relay for Life. And for the third year, Marie Iverson has been the team captain. Besides the Task Force team, she is team captain for two teams from her church.



Marie Iverson, CVBC Relay for Life Team Captain

This is the 15th year the American Cancer Society has held the Relay for Life. It was their largest event to date, raising over \$135,000.



Relay for Life Participants: (L to R) Cindy Harris, Christine Carpenter, Marie Iverson, Kathy Boeckman

The Breast Cancer Task Force Team had 25 participants walking in the Relay and raised \$2,000 for cancer research. Marie, as well as Gabbi DeWitt and Kate Case were available to share breast cancer information.

The American Cancer Society and the Cedar Valley Breast Cancer Task Force appreciates the enthusiasm and dedication Marie brings to the Relay for Life.