



An Interview with Keith I. Block, MD:

# Is Biology, Destiny?



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**The statistics are concerning, if not downright frightening:**

If you're a man living in the US, you have a 1 in 2 chance of developing cancer in your lifetime. A woman, a 1 in 3 chance. One in 4 women will die of heart disease, and of those who are middle aged, eighty percent have at least one risk factor for cardiovascular disease. What's worse, they don't even know it! And if this isn't daunting enough, most of us have either a parent with diabetes, a family history of cancer, or a sibling with cardiovascular disease. Meanwhile, you're doing your best to get it all right, exercising daily, getting enough sleep, managing stress and eating a healthful diet. Yet you can't help but wonder: is my biology, my destiny?

**Q. Dr. Block, is biology, destiny?**

**A.** It's a common misperception that we're stuck with our biology. While biochemical imbalances and genetic vulnerability can increase the risks for many diseases, recent science demonstrates integrative interventions can overcome these risks. Participating in a lifestyle program focused on exercise, a low fat diet, yoga and meditation can alter risks and even reverse coronary artery disease. But these same lifestyle interventions, particularly when tailored to the individual, can change one's biochemical condition and genetic expression. Integrative and nutritional interventions can alter the behavior of hundreds, if not thousands of genes, by turning some off that promote cancer, and turning some on that fight it. However, research is showing that implementing lifestyle changes that are not tailored to your specific needs has more limited value.

When you tailor a regimen to your own biology, you maximize its true potential.

**Q. If someone is concerned about their biology, or family history, where do they start?**

**A.** The first step is to do an analysis of your biochemical environment and genetic risks. We can now profile a patient to get a genetic and biochemical "fingerprint," which provides insight into where you're at, what your risks are and what specific targets and imbalances need to be addressed. This will then determine what steps you need to take to change your biological destiny.

**Q. But how does one know what their unique biology is?**

**A.** To simplify a very complex process: Recent advances in gene knowledge allow us to scan and assess dozens of genetic "misspellings" found among

your DNA library. These defects increase your susceptibility to health problems such as obesity, cardiovascular disease, osteoporosis, various cancers and even poor tolerance to some medications. Mapping your biochemical imbalances and DNA variants can provide targets to counter biology that drives disease risk.

**Q. And once you have this knowledge, what then?**

**A.** Once you've identified these areas of high risk, there are lifestyle, nutritional, nutraceutical and when needed, even pharmacological interventions that can improve your health. Research suggests that implementing this type of comprehensive, tailored program can change biology, thereby reducing the risk of various diseases.

**Foods, Herbs And Phytochemicals to Alter Your Biological Destiny:**

**Legumes** Contains proteins, fiber and saponins that can squelch free radicals, protect DNA from injury and help regulate and stabilize blood sugar and counter hypoglycemia and risk of diabetes.

**Tomatoes** Contains lycopene that slows the growth of malignant prostate cells and can protect low density lipoproteins to counter oxidation and improve cardiovascular health.

**Turmeric** Provides anti-inflammatory action.

**Green Tea** – Can help with managing weight loss, controlling blood sugar and protecting against malignant disease.

**Broccoli** Contains several important phytochemicals that can detoxify carcinogenic compounds in the body.

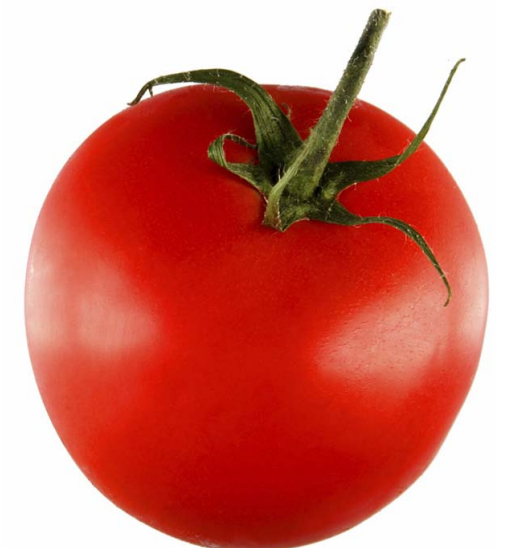
**Garlic** Protects against cardiovascular disease; contributes to cancer protection.

**Blueberries** Can inhibit a critical cancer growth factor, and a potent brain food.

**Flaxseed** Contain omega-3 fats and lignans that help fight heart disease, slow prostate cancer proliferation and prevent breast cancer.

**Almonds** Contain monounsaturated fats and antioxidants.

**Brown Rice** High fiber; whole grains provide sustained energy.



**Keith I. Block, MD** is co-founder and medical director of the Block Center for Integrative Cancer Treatment, in Evanston, IL. For additional information, and to register to win a free nutritional consultation from one of the Block Center's registered dietitians, visit [www.blockmd.com](http://www.blockmd.com). Block Center for Integrative Cancer Treatment is located at 1800 Sherman Ave., Suite 350, Evanston, IL. 60201. 847.492.3040.