



## **What You Eat May Fuel Cancer: Medical Experts Advise A Diet Rich In Omega-3s And Phytonutrients To Help Fight The Disease**

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If you want to reduce your risk for getting cancer, heart disease, diabetes and a host of other diseases, the message is clear - eat a nutrient-rich, low-fat, high fiber diet, with plenty of fruit and vegetables. So why is this wisdom forgotten when a person is diagnosed with cancer, and the standard advice becomes: "Eat whatever you want, whatever you can tolerate," even when this may include a diet high in fat and refined sugars.

According to two of the country's leading authorities on cancer and nutrition, David Katz, MD and Keith Block, MD, the typical American high-fat, empty calorie diet can set the stage for an inflammatory response that actually fuels a cancer patient's disease, undermines treatment, and promotes malnutrition.

"Cancer generates the production of low-grade inflammatory molecules that breakdown lean muscle, and can disrupt immune functioning. The heavy consumption of fats, refined flours and sugars found in the traditional American diet can increase this inflammation, contributing to a lack of appetite, more debilitating weight loss, and actually promote the very disease the patient is trying to fight," explains Keith I. Block, MD, Medical/Scientific Director of the Block Center for Integrative Cancer Treatment in Evanston, Illinois.

In fact, in many cases it's not cancer that kills patients. According to The National Cancer Institute, some 20% to 40% of cancer patients die from complications of malnutrition, and 80% of patients will develop some form of clinical malnutrition. And even relatively small degrees of under-nutrition can seriously undermine a cancer patient's health and are associated with a marked increased risk of hospital admissions and death.

"Cancer may kill, in part, by causing starvation and conventional therapies may actually exacerbate this aspect of the disease," says ABC News medical contributor and nationally renowned authority on nutrition, David Katz, MD. "While these treatments can effectively attack the cancer, they may kill the patient in the process of doing so." Katz, an Associate Professor of Public Health and director of the Yale prevention Research Centers adds: "There is thus a need to combine effective assaults on cancer, with effective nurturing, and nourishing, of the body. Optimizing nutrition during and following cancer therapy is unquestionably a vital element in overcoming the disease, and reclaiming good health."

So what kind of a diet can fight malnutrition and help a cancer patient combat their disease Drs. Block and Katz offer the following suggestions:

Include cancer and inflammation-fighting phytonutrients, found in abundance in many fruits and vegetables - berries, grapes, cherries, brussel sprouts, broccoli, collards, kale, carrots, spinach,

garlic and onions.

Eat or supplement with Omega-3 fatty acids, found in cold water fish such as salmon, trout and tuna.

Choose complex carbohydrates, such as brown rice, barley, quinoa, and other whole grains.

Eat healthy sources of proteins such as fish legumes, soy, and whey protein, and use “healthy” oils such as flaxseed, canola, walnut, and pumpkin seed.

Choose energy dense/nutrient dense foods such as avocado; nut butters; and soy.

Avoid “bad” dietary fats such as saturated fats found in milk, cheese, butter, red meat, pork, coconut, and poultry.

Eliminate unnatural fats, called trans fat, found abundantly in margarine, hydrogenated oils, as well as many baked goods and convenience foods.

Reduce or eliminate simple carbohydrates such as sugar, honey, high fructose corn syrup, concentrated sweeteners, sugary beverages, cookies, cakes, pastries, white bread, crackers and white-flour baked goods. These are high-glycemic foods that cause a sudden rise in blood sugar and ultimately increase inflammation.

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