

Cancer Answers

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Stress and Protein

excerpted from Chapter two of my book "A Woman's Cancer Journey Primer"

During times of stress, such as chemotherapy or radiation, your body requires adequate amounts of protein. This is because the liver makes albumin from protein to help handle the stress. If enough protein is not being consumed, the liver will actually "steal" it from other parts of your body to make albumin. Although it is in effect protecting you from the stress, it is also weakening you by eating away at your protein stores. This can lead to a protein deficiency. On the other hand, too much protein can cause or exacerbate other health problems. Be certain to check with your doctor or nutritionist to determine the optimal protein intake level for you.

Suggested Protein Amounts for Healthy Adults
45 to 60 grams per day (10-15% of caloric intake)
-per the Cancer Treatment Centers of America

There are two groups of protein: complete and incomplete. Complete proteins contain all the essential amino acids in correct proportions for growth. Sources for these proteins are dairy products, eggs, fish, fowl and meats. Incomplete proteins, on the other hand, lack either one or more of the essential amino acids or they contain them in the wrong proportions for growth. Sources for these proteins are beans, grains, fruits, nuts and vegetables.

Interestingly enough, if you combine two types of incomplete proteins, they can complement each other and create a complete protein.

For more information on how to combine these incomplete proteins to create complete proteins and other helpful dietary information visit: www.cancercenter.com/after-care-services/protein.cfm.

When purchasing animal products for protein, try to buy only those that are labeled "organically fed and hormone free". The hormone free part of this statement is of utmost importance when you have a hormone-based cancer. Hormones added to the diets of livestock, dairy cows or poultry could counteract the drugs that are in your chemotherapy cocktail.

Buying organically fed, hormone free meat is a good practice, not only during treatment, but also for the rest of your life. Eating food that is organic is healthier, and ingesting hormones second-hand from meat is proving not to be nutritionally sound.

Additionally if you have a hormone-based cancer, consult your doctor regarding eating soy or soy based products as a source of protein during and after treatment. Soy has an estrogenic effect so some doctors feel it is best not to consume soy. Tofu, soy nuts and soymilk are direct sources of soy. Other foods, including some protein bars and protein powders, are soy-based. Avoid both direct and soy-based products if your doctor recommends no soy.

No matter what kind of cancer you have, concentrate on giving your body the highest quality food possible. Your body is in a deadly fight and needs organic, natural, chemical-free food to overcome the opponent.

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Protein and perhaps food in general is not going to taste good to some of you during treatment. Both chemotherapy and radiation can cause this. Although the cause is somewhat unclear on both treatments, it is clearer with chemotherapy. It is most likely the same reason a person on chemotherapy may have mouth sores. (More on mouth care in a bit.) Chemotherapy attacks the cells in your body that multiply the fastest because cancer cells multiply so quickly. Cells in your mouth, including your taste buds, multiply quickly, and that is why they become a target with chemotherapy drugs. This compromises your taste buds, which may make food taste differently or even become distasteful. Combating nausea in addition to this can become quite a challenge for getting the nutrition you need to stay strong and fight your way back to complete health.

-next month I will share general and specific advice for getting proper nutrition during treatment. If you need help before then feel free to email me. Till next month - God Bless!

A Little Housekeeping

Thanks to each of you who took my survey. I am excited to better meet your needs and measure up to your expectations with the content of the newsletter.

FINALLY! The hard copies of my book will be available the first of next week. I believe you will find it full of information, help and HOPE. The cost will be \$13.95 plus shipping and any applicable taxes. You can order them on my website.

Remember every moment of every day that you are special to God.