PRACTICAL NUTRITION FOR CANCER PATIENTS
By Paul Chek

Every one of us has cancer in our body, but why don’t we all die from it? Why is it that in spite of advanced medical technology, more people than ever are dying from cancer? Why is it that even athletes who exercise every day and live on what they call “performance foods” are dying every year of cancer?

After spending billions of dollars on cancer research in the US, cancer rates continue to climb. In fact, the incidence of cancer has increased 44% since 1950. At this rate, cancer will soon pass heart disease as the number one cause of death in America (1). Currently, one in three Americans will get cancer in their lifetime and one in four will die from it (1). It is projected that one out of two people will contract cancer by the year 2010!

When one considers that there have been more advances in medicine, nutrition, and every branch of health care, and that there are more doctors per capita than ever in history, it quickly becomes apparent that something is VERY WRONG with our current approach! Could it be that treating cancer and trying to find a cure by studying it is simply not the answer?

TO ACHIEVE HEALTH, STUDY THE HEALTHY!
It is a known fact that we all have cancer cells in our bodies at any given time in our lives (2), yet clearly, we don’t all develop malignant cancer. It is also well known that prior to the advent of processed foods, cancer was relatively unheard of. Yet, modern cancer researchers continue to study the disease in hope of finding a cure or treatment for it. However, by merely looking at the statistics of the rising incidence of cancer, it is safe to say that after fifty years of looking for a cure, researchers are failing miserably!

In my clinical experience, I have found that if you want to learn about health, you must study the healthy! The concept of studying the healthy to find health is not a new one. In 1936, a highly respected scientist, dentist and expert in human nutrition named Weston A. Price, traveled the globe studying indigenous populations and correlating their dietary habits with their incidence of disease and dental carries (3). Price found over and over that in tribes and cultures that consumed a whole-food diet, dental carries and disease was almost unheard of!

Dr. Price’s research was consistent with the research of famous medical doctor, Francis Marrion Pottenger, who wrote the book, “Pottenger’s Cats” (4). Pottenger clearly demonstrate using extensive studies of cats that exposure to pasteurized milk and/or cooked meats resulted in rapid onset of disease and bodily malformation; his clinical observations suggested that similar results occur in humans. Because of the findings in his studies, Dr. Pottenger stated, “…nutrition becomes one of the most important elements in preventive medicine.”
Regardless of which disease process is studied, the link between poor nutrition and disease, including cancer, clearly exists in studies and clinical observations of animals and man. Our current dietary habits are producing disease at an alarming rate. Consider the following:

- The USDA has imposed new rules for what is considered “safe for human consumption” including animal carcasses with open sores and certain illnesses. Illnesses that do not present a health danger include: cancer, disease caused by intestinal worms, sores, infectious arthritis, and poultry pneumonia (5).
- Our food supply contains petrochemical residues from plastics, which have estrogen-like endocrine disrupting effects in animals and humans. These substances have been linked to hormone-sensitive cancers including dysplasia, endometrial cancer and prostatic cancer (6).
- The average person consumes 150 pounds of sugar per year. That also means that for every person consuming only five pounds, there is another consuming 300 lbs (7)!
- The average American consumes 20 pounds a year (dry weight) in food additives, preservatives and colorings (8). A large percentage of these chemicals are synthetic and have not been researched with regard to their effects on human health.

Given all this information, what can we do with a cancer patient and what can we do so we don’t become one?

ACTIVATING THE HEALER WITHIN
The body is well equipped to deal with cancer, but this process relies heavily on nutrition, which could prevent 50-90% of all cancer (1). Yet do we have any idea what proper nutrition is? Bookstores are full of books with contradictory advice on nutrition and doctors aren’t any better. Not surprisingly, the work of nutrition pioneers such as Price, Pottenger and many others suggests that you can’t treat the disease that has the person, you must treat the person that has the disease! These pioneers, and many others demonstrated that when we live in accordance with our biological design and nature, disease is rare!

While there are a plethora of nutrition books available, studies of healthy populations show a few consistent findings that will give you the nutritional support to maintain a healthy immune system and body. Let’s examine them:

WATER CONSUMPTION
Your body is made up of approximately 75% water and your brain tissue is approximately 85% water (9). Today, children and adults consume an alarming amount of colored, carbonated, sweetened and highly processed beverages, not to mention alcohol!

If you want to achieve optimum health and have a fully functional immune system, you must consume at least half your body weight in ounces of clean water daily. Because
current research shows that literally every main waterway in the world is polluted with industrial chemicals and medical drug residues, it is advisable to drink bottled water from a natural spring. Top selling brands are generally good choices because they don’t sit on the shelves too long, which minimizes the time the water sits in plastic containers.

Drinking half your body weight in ounces of quality water each day will give your cellular machinery one of the most essential constituents of energy production. Adequate clean water is also vital to proper functioning of the CNS, digestive, eliminative and detoxification systems. Any time the systems of digestion, elimination and detoxification are functioning at suboptimal levels, you can rest assured that your immune system is stressed!

EAT ORGANIC WHENEVER POSSIBLE!
Regardless of what anyone tells you, conventionally farmed meats, vegetables and fruits commonly contain harmful levels of pesticide, herbicide, fungicide and/or antibiotic and hormone residues (visit www.theecologist.org for more information). Additionally, there is overwhelming evidence that our soils are depleted from conventional farming methods (see www.soilassociation.org), which leaves us little choice but to turn to your local Certified Organic farmer for food capable of sustaining a healthy body and immune system. It was Mother Nature and her farming techniques that got us here, yet it is the conventional farmer and industrial farming community who thinks they can outsmart her and by doing so, have ushered us disease by the truckload! In fact, many successful doctors that use nutrition to treat cancer insist upon organic foods for their patients because they have more high-quality macro and micronutrients, and are free from pesticide residues.

EAT A WHOLE-FOOD DIET
All the natives and healthy populations studied by the pioneers of health ate whole foods. Processing food, where it did exist, was minimal and it was performed without the use of chemicals or unnatural means. Most native cultures consumed organ meats of animals for their rich supply of vitamins and essential nutrients. Additionally, wild animals had a much higher percentage of unsaturated fats in their meat than conventionally farmed animals. Chicken eggs from free-range chickens have a superior Omega 3 to Omega 6 fatty acid ratio when compared to conventionally-farmed chicken eggs.

While eating a whole-food diet may seem challenging in today’s hustle-and-bustle environment of high stress and fast food, we must remember that neither our high stress environment nor the processed fast foods we eat are what we were designed for – these two things did not exist in native populations that were free from cancer and disease!

KNOW YOUR METABOLIC TYPE
During the past 10 years, I have used the methods of metabolic typing (10) to determine the optimal macronutrient ratios for my clients. This system is in total harmony with the findings of Dr. Price, who found that the macronutrients and macronutrient ratios varied
significantly from region to region in his study of healthy cultures. For example, he found that the Eskimos maintained healthy bodies on about 90% fats-oils and proteins and only 10% carbohydrates, while the Quetchus Indians of South America maintained healthy bodies on what was largely a vegetable diet.

The problem is that many of us do not know what “tribe” we are from because we are a combination of cultures that have procreated through the generations. So how one person eats may not be the way you should eat! This could be a reason that some diet books work well for some people and poorly for others. By knowing your metabolic type and using that knowledge when you consume your organic meats and produce, you can go a long way toward having a healthy body with a strong immune system, and if you have cancer you will be providing your body with the resources to activate the healer within!

READ LABELS!
I have a simple rule I tell my clients, “If you can’t pronounce a word on the label, don’t put it in your mouth!” Today, our livers are heavily challenged with the mass of chemicals in our environment and food supply. Back in 1900, there was far less our liver had to worry about than there is today – medical drugs, food preservatives, chemicals and heavy metals did not exist in amounts even remotely close to what we deal with today!

Just to give you an example of how careful we have to be to protect ourselves from bombarding our liver with potentially toxic chemicals, consider that there are over 40 chemical ingredients used in the flavor “strawberry” (as used in a Burger King milk shake) that are not listed on the ingredients list because they fall under a certain percentage of total volume of the product and are categorized by the FDA as “GRAS” or “Generally Regarded As Safe” (11). Next time you read a label that says “artificial colorings” or “artificial flavors”, you may want to think twice about what you’re about to consume!

TRAIN, BUT DON’T DRAIN!
There is no doubt that exercise is essential to having a healthy body and an optimal metabolism. However, what is the line between too little exercise, too much exercise, and the perfect amount? Evidence suggests that when we exercise our immune system improves its functional capacity, yet when we over-exercise there is immune suppression. This has been demonstrated in distance runners that showed an elevated incidence of upper respiratory tract infections due to over-training (12). Suffice it to say, there is a lot of good information available on over-training if you want to learn more, and know that exercise is a stress to the body that can help or harm someone depending on how it’s used. If you have an already physiologically stressed client, be wary that your exercise program may be the stress that pushes their body over the edge!

CONCLUSION
If you or a client has cancer or if you want to make sure you never get cancer, I strongly suggest you look at certain factors and lifestyle habits that have been consistent throughout time among healthy populations. While there are some clinical pearls to be gained from conventional medical and nutritional approaches, the statistics on cancer and diseases make it clear, we need to get back to basics if we want to live a life as healthy, happy and productive beings!

References