

Diet and Cancer Survivors

by Susan Silberstein PhD 3 weeks ago [3 comments](#)



A new Tufts University study published a couple of weeks ago in the journal *Cancer* found that cancer survivors aren't eating as well as they should. Big surprise! These patients were found to be indulging in too much junk food and not getting enough fiber and essential nutrients. Well, considering that most oncologists don't tell their patients about the benefits of healthful eating to improve survival and quality of life, of course many patients don't eat well.

It is well known that cancer survivors are at high risk of recurrence and other health problems throughout their lives. Surgery, radiation, and [chemotherapy](#) can all cause side effects — both short-term and long-term. Depending on the type of treatment, survivors may be at increased risk of heart problems, lung problems, gastro-intestinal problems or other types of cancer.

One way to prevent complications is to maintain a [good diet](#). But according to the new study, many survivors simply aren't doing that. I wonder just how long they will remain survivors — not to mention whether the survivors are thrivers.

In a recent Norwegian study of 862 cancer survivors and lifestyle, more than 80 percent failed to meet the goal of five servings of fruits and vegetables daily. That's not my goal — I'm looking to double or triple that!

The Tufts study found that cancer survivors eat less fiber and take in more empty calories than people who have never had cancer. Researchers concluded that “dietary changes that include more fiber, fruit, and vegetables and less fat and added sugar

would be important for cancer survivors.” At BeatCancer.org, we've been recommending that for years. In fact, there are over two dozen mechanisms and

advantages by which nutritional support influences survival and quality of life in diagnosed patients. You can read about them in my book, [Kitchen Chemotherapy](#).

The research team, led by Dr. Fang Fang Zhang, PhD, assistant professor at the Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy at Tufts University, looked at the diets of 1,533 adults, including those with cancer, who were part of the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey from 1999 to 2010. The team used the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans created by the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Health and Human Services – guidelines which, by our standards, are not even optimal for cancer control.

The study results were based on a total healthy eating index score of 100. Cancer survivors scored 47.2, while those who never had [cancer](#) scored 48.3. That's certainly not much of a difference. But when you figure in those with cancer who ate poorly and did NOT survive, you might find a much greater difference!

People who had had cancer scored poorly when it came to eating green [vegetables](#) and whole grains. They consumed less fiber, [vitamin D](#) and other vitamins and minerals than the recommended daily amount (RDA). Those who had a history of cancer also took in more empty calories and ate more saturated fat than healthy adults.

“Unfortunately,” said Zhang, “nutrition is not routinely integrated into the delivery of optimal care for cancer patients. Given the poor diet quality we and others found in cancer survivors, and the high chronic disease burden in this population, it is imperative to routinely integrate nutrition intervention to improve the health and well-being of cancer survivors....” Amen!

Dr. Zhang concluded that her study “shows that it is critical for all providers working with cancer survivors to provide education and support to help patients achieve a cancer recurrence-preventive diet.” Certainly, the issue of nutritional support for patients who struggle to eat during treatment due to nausea, taste changes, or loss of appetite can be challenging, but that's one of our specialties at BeatCancer.org. If you would like help with food choices and menu planning, request to speak with one of our [counselors](#), who will review your diet in great detail and recommend health-promoting changes. And if you need some healthful, simple, and tasty recipes, look no further than [Hungry for Health](#)

References:

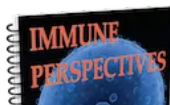
[1] Cancer Survivors Aren't Eating as Well as They Should. HealthlineNews Oct. 13, 2015. <http://www.healthline.com/health-news/cancer-survivors-arent-eating-as-well-they-should-101315>

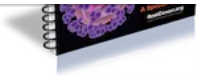
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by [Susan Silberstein PhD](#)

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1.  Shasha November 16, 2015, 8:38 pm

HI, No gluten/dairy/soy/sugar/GMO may hurt...vitamins/good oils/minerals/probiotic...LDN..detoxing may help the immune system and cancer. Gluten can be like Heroin to the brain and sugar like cocaine. Even microscopic amounts of gluten may hurt intestines so nutrients don't absorb. GMO corn may also hurt the gut lining. Soy is GMO usually and may block the thyroid/lowering oxygen. Sugar may feed cancer. American food may taste great, but hurt the gut lining...then brain/body and all cells may not be made right to work right. Less minerals may lower pH and oxygen which cancer loves. The people I know who got Celiac the Celiac diet/help are still on this earth after cancer. The cancer doctor sent one cancer person to the dietician, but they did not tell her sugar feeds cancer and yeast which may burden the immune system. She had ice cream/bananas in her grocery cart and didn't know what to buy/eat. She had cancer for the 2nd time. Chemo/radiation may hurt intestines so they in addition to gluten/GMO corn may hurt the intestines so nutrients don't absorb. Surgery/biopsies may burden the immune system and spread cancer. Antibiotics after surgery may hurt the gut lining and lower the immune system and hurt mitochondria. Antibiotics may let yeast grow. People need to eat for health and not taste. Any food with a label may have hidden gluten/dairy/soy/sugar/GMO. Certified gluten free may have 20ppm along with meat basting/some spices/nuts not sold in the shell. Eating pure organic foods they cook themselves, exercise/sunlight/good water..not tap water with F may help the immune system. Vit D3 5000IU, Vit C, zinc, fish oil 2000mg, Mg, Vit B12 methycobalamin shot/under the tongue kind, probiotic when stomach acid is low, HCl and enzymes with meals, rhodiola, coenzme Q10, Coenzymated B vitamins, MTHF, Nature's plus- Source of life multiple and more may help rebuild cells so they burn more oxygen and help the immune system.

[Reply](#)

1.  [Jane Preston](#) November 24, 2015, 12:38 pm

Shasha, EXCELLENT information!!!

As a three-time breast cancer survivor, I can't tell you the number of times I've heard doctors tell me and other patients, "eat anything you

want!” I know most physicians don’t have the nutritional education necessary to educate their patients and that is why I encourage my customers to read labels, practice prevention and be proactive about their health.

Thank you for the above information!!

[Reply](#)



1. Shasha November 24, 2015, 2:57 pm

Hi, You are welcome! Here is the longer version. Happiness...

<http://articles.mercola.com/members/Shasha/default.aspx>

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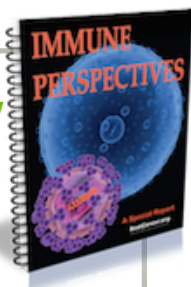
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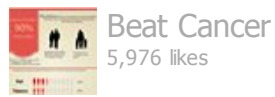
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5