

Cancer Prevention

It is not difficult to understand that the easiest and best way to beat cancer in your own body is through prevention. This offensive strategy against disease requires a lifestyle that should be pursued by everyone living in today's polluted environment. If you have had cancer or are in remission, if you have cancer now or are in a particularly high-risk group, or even if you feel it will not touch you, developing a cancer-free lifestyle is the only insurance policy available for good health.

One key in developing a cancer-free lifestyle is ongoing, moderate exercise. Research indicates that those who use up 2,000 calories or more in physical activity each week have a third less risk of getting all types of cancer as compared to sedentary individuals. One study found that women who exercise an average of four hours per week reduced their risk of breast cancer by 50 percent compared to that of age-matched inactive women. Exercise may also help boost the immune system and even help promote such healthy habits as getting a good night's sleep.

And the best exercise may not be as strenuous as you think. Brisk walking, not jogging or pumping iron, may well prove to be the perfect exercise. This form of exercise provides the ideal opportunity for worship and prayer as well. Just take along a tape player loaded with your favorite worship music, and you're off to a healthier physical and spiritual life!

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Beating Cancer

Those who stop fearing the disease are usually the ones who overcome it.

Don't Ignore Eating Your Vegetables

Question: I seem healthier since I became a vegan. Do you believe God made us to be vegetarians?

J.P., Boise, Idaho

Answer: The book of Genesis says God gave us every “seed-bearing plant” and “tree that has fruit with seed in it” as our food (see 1:29). From that verse alone we could draw the conclusion that He created us to be vegetarians.

However, God also equipped our bodies with canine teeth, a fact that tells me He designed us to eat meat as well. The problem is, most of us consume meat as if we had nothing but canine teeth (ones the size of a saber-toothed tiger's)!

Meat is a good source of protein, but it has no medicinal value. It is also much more likely than the lowly vegetable to cause an illness in your body. The fact is, it's pretty tough to get a degenerative disease if your diet is free from pesticides, antibiotics, preservatives and hormones—substances that most American foods, especially meats, are loaded with.

In contrast, whole foods organically grown and pesticide-free contain the precise nutrients our bodies need for fighting off disease. Take the tomato, for example. The body uses lycopene—the tomato's red pigment that also helps combat prostate cancer—much more effectively when it derives the nutrient from the tomato rather than from a supplement.

I happen to be a strong proponent of a vegetarian diet, particularly a broad one that includes fruits, legumes and grains. I put all my patients at Oasis of Hope Hospital on a mild vegetarian diet that allows (mostly to avoid mutiny!) a miniscule portion of fish or free-range chicken. I've seen how a strict vegetarian diet with a high intake of carrot juice

and green juices such as barley or papaya can stop or reverse heart disease, diabetes and some cancers.

Cancer, especially of the breast, is directly related to the amount of fat and protein ingested. This has been shown by a cooperative study called the China Project, which I wrote about in my book *The Hope of Living Cancer Free* (Siloam). Chinese women eat an average of four grams (ounces) of animal protein a day and American women an average of one pound (16 ounces) a day. Researchers determined this difference to be the reason incidences of breast cancer are more than 10 times higher among American women than Chinese women.

My position on meat consumption is like the apostle Paul's on his personal liberty—all things are permissible but not all things are beneficial (see 1 Cor. 6:12). If you eat meat, do so in very small quantities and buy free-range meats without hormones and antibiotics.

Question: Why does the Old Testament say we can't eat pork and shellfish? I love bacon with my eggs, and fresh shrimp and oysters.

S.T., Micanopy, Florida

Answer: God tells us in Leviticus 11 that some meat is "clean" and some isn't. He instructs us to eat only the meat of animals that chew cud and have split hooves. That rules out pork. Wow, no bacon?

He also tells us to detest anything living in the water that does not have fins and scales. Oh, no—no lobster, shrimp or abalone?

It gets worse: We're not supposed to eat eagles, vultures, owls, storks or bats either! Seriously, though—are pigs, sharks and lobsters truly not clean? In fact, they are not.

The creatures God banned did not have detoxifying systems—and still don't. They are storage units for all the poisons,

toxins and sewage they ingest or absorb. Simply put, they are nature's garbage collectors.

After Jesus brought grace into the world, the apostle Peter was told in a vision that he should no longer call "unclean" what God had made "clean" (see Acts 10:9-22). It's understood that his dream was at least symbolic—so he would comprehend grace and know Gentiles were accepted by God. But was it also, as some believe, corrective—so he would be unconcerned about eating meats previously forbidden under the Levitical law? Maybe.

Is it a sin to eat the meat of the creatures outlawed in Leviticus 11? Well, I don't think if you eat pork you will go to hell. But it is very likely that you will go to heaven much sooner.

How Bad Is the Bite?

Question: What can I do to protect my family from the West Nile virus? I have heard that the fall is when the worst cases appear.

K.T., Memphis, Tennessee

Answer: West Nile virus is, in people, a mild disease caused by a flavivirus—one of a family of viruses transmitted by ticks and mosquitoes. Its symptoms are flulike and, in the majority of cases, typically last only a few days and do not appear to cause any long-term health problems.

The virus is primarily a disease of birds and is transmitted to humans by "overwintering" mosquitoes (species that survive the winter). Until 1999 it had not been documented in the West. It remains common to Africa, eastern Europe, western

Asia and the Middle East.

The virus bears a scary reputation, perhaps more so now that it is linked to several hundred deaths in the United States, where it has been moving into new areas. As many as 200,000 Americans may have been exposed to it since 1999, when it killed seven people in New York City. The 2002 U.S. outbreak killed 284 people and infected 4,156 in 40 states before becoming dormant last winter.

Back in 2003, the national Centers for Disease Control and Prevention had documented 3,541 cases of the virus for this year, 66 of them fatal. Thirty-seven states had reported cases, and Colorado had been the hardest hit, with 1,214 cases and 19 deaths.

Tragic though all this is, it is equally true that the disease is not nearly as notorious as its reputation. The truth is, the West Nile virus is not highly infectious. Yes, sporadic outbreaks have occurred—but less than 1 percent of people infected with the disease will develop severe illness. P> The elderly, chronically ill and those with weak immune systems may develop West Nile encephalitis, meningitis or meningoencephalitis (the potentially fatal complications). These cases occur primarily in the late summer or early fall and may be the kind you refer to in your question.

The West Nile virus is, in fact, a disease you can help your family easily avoid. Do everything you can to remove mosquito-breeding areas near your home, and when outside wear protective clothing and insect repellents that contain DEET.

To the person with a healthy immune system, the virus will cause mild transitory symptoms, if any at all. Provide your family with a diet rich in fruits and vegetables supplemented with vitamins and minerals. Couple it with a positive attitude and the joy of the Lord and you'll boost your immunity significantly!

Question: My child has frequent ear infections and gets antibiotics at least five times a year. Are there natural alternatives for this?

S.G., Brandywine, Pennsylvania

Answer: Antibiotics were one of the wonder drugs of the 20th century, but over-prescribing is decreasing their effectiveness in the 21st century. Consider that:

According to the Pediatric Infectious Disease Journal, Streptococcus pneumoniae, Haemophilus influenzae and Moraxella catarrhalis, the bacteria causing almost all ear infections, are approaching 50 percent resistance in the United States.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that between 1979 and 1987 only percent of pneumococcus strains were resistant to antibiotics. According to the Journal of the American Medical Association, 6.6 percent had become resistant by 1994.

Researchers writing in the New England Journal of Medicine identified bacteria in patient samples that resist all currently available antibiotic drugs.

A child's pain is most disturbing and shouldn't be minimized. If your child has minor symptoms, then under your physician's care provide painkillers or anti-inflammatory agents. Natural antibiotics include garlic and milk thistle. I myself have five children, and only two of them have ever received antibiotics.

I give them Kyolic Aged Garlic Extract, and for ear inflammation I put a small piece of warm garlic in their outer ear canal to bring down the inflammation and help with the pain. I give them Bee-Alive Royal Jelly for their immune system while keeping them in bed and away from school (which is the therapy that kids really like).

Francisco Contreras, M.D., oversees Oasis of Hope Hospital (), a cancer-care facility in Mexico widely known for alternative-treatment methods. He is the author of several books on health, including his newest, *The Coming Cancer Cure* (Siloam,).

Protocol for Diabetes

Much can be done to control diabetes other than giving insulin injections.

Scared of SARS?

Adopting a healthful lifestyle will lower your risk of contracting SARS.

Smallpox Could Make Comeback

Editor's Note: This article first appeared in 2003.

Question If the smallpox vaccine is made available again in the United States, should I take it?

J.E., Portland, Oregon

Answer: If you were to ask that question of someone involved with the federal government, the answer might be yes because of the looming threat of bioterrorism. If you were to ask a Christian spiritual leader the same question, he or she might say your faith will protect you and the vaccine isn't necessary.

Each of us will have to make this decision for ourselves. Instead of recommending for or against the vaccination, let me educate you about smallpox and the vaccine. Then, you, with the advice of your personal physician, can make an informed decision.

Smallpox is considered an extremely lethal disease of yesterday and a possibly devastating illness of tomorrow. As recently as the 1950s, it was taking 15 million lives worldwide. It kills 1 in 3 people it infects and leaves its survivors disfigured. Last century, smallpox took the lives of 500 million people.

Fortunately for us, however, that is in the past. The world has not seen an incidence of the disease since 1977, when the last case of natural smallpox was reported in Somalia in eastern Africa. But considering the deadly force of this illness, it is understandable why the vaccine is on everyone's mind right now.

The vaccine being proposed is effective on natural smallpox if it is given within four days of exposure to the disease. It does not contain the actual smallpox virus; however, 15 people in every 1 million vaccinated are expected to experience serious side effects, and 2 in every 1 million are expected to die from the vaccination. Scores more will suffer heavy side effects.

Because there are no reported cases of smallpox at this time and the side effects of the vaccine are severe and risky, I can understand the position that's being taken by the Advisory

Committee of Immunization Practices, which has recommended to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) not to distribute the smallpox vaccine to the general public. If there is even one case of smallpox discovered, the CDC will consider it a public-health emergency. If that happens, I expect there to be a rush to vaccinate—though being vaccinated will be voluntary.

Right now, we are in the wait-and-pray mode. Let's not bow to fear; let's rejoice because we are more than conquerors (see Rom. 8:37). I admire missionaries who go where there are diseases they aren't immune to. They go with a conviction that God will protect them—and when He doesn't, their reward in heaven is greater than the gain of this world.

Question: What can you tell me about the vaccine for cervical cancer? And when will it be available?

S.S., Willow Creek, California

Answer: At the end of 2002, a study came out that indicated a new vaccine developed by the huge pharmaceutical company Merck showed promise of helping women avoid cervical cancer. Calling the drug a "cervical cancer vaccine" is a misnomer, however. The vaccine actually fights HPV, which is the virus known to cause cervical cancer.

Reviewing the study, I do believe that the researchers are on to something, but the test group was too small and the duration of the trial too short to be conclusive. In fact, officials indicate that if everything goes well through the required testing, this vaccine won't be available for another five years.

Here is the good news: Cervical cancer isn't very prominent in the United States. The reason is, we have better pollution control, and the majority of our citizens can afford to bathe daily in treated water.

This vaccine will have a bigger impact in underdeveloped countries where good hygiene is a big problem. The question

will be whether or not people in underdeveloped countries will be able to afford the vaccine. I truly hope so.

My recommendation is to practice good hygiene and limit your sexual practice to one partner within the institution of marriage. This is the best way to immunize yourself from all sexually transmitted diseases, as well as cervical cancer.

People who do this will, most likely, have little need for a vaccine.

New Year's Resolutions

In 2003, commit to a lifestyle change, not to a list of unrealistic goals.

Hold the Fries, Please

Recent changes by McDonald's by no means upgrade fried foods to healthy treats.