

You Can Prevent Cancer - MabuhayRadio

Written by Dr. Philip S. Chua

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What causes cancer? In our previous column, we defined what cancer was and discussed its etiologies (causes), and other specific questions on cancer. The most striking information we revealed last week was that more than 75% (3 out of 4) of all cancers in humans were caused by only three things: diet, tobacco, and alcohol. Therefore, one does not have to be a physician, much less a rocket scientist, to know that majority of cancers are preventable, and that it is within our power to prevent this deadly malady. The genetic factor could also be positively influenced and changed by a healthy lifestyle to one's advantage.

So, what is the problem?

The problem is the lack of discipline on our part. We continue to eat red meat and a lot of high-cholesterol or fatty foods knowing these are bad for our heart and also increase our chances of having cancer of the colon, breast and uterus, etc. Smokers know that tobacco causes cancer of the throat, lungs, kidney, urinary bladder, pancreas, among others, and still fume away with gusto. Moderate to heavy alcohol drinkers are aware that ethanol causes not only liver cirrhosis but cancer of the digestive tract, liver and breast, and are not scared to bend their elbow and say "cheers!" unabated. It is no longer the lack of awareness or knowledge that is leading many of us to self-destruct. It is the lack of discipline. The lack of inner strength and resolve.

Do tomatoes prevent cancer?

Yes. According to a Harvard study of 47,000 men, those who had 10 or more servings of tomato-based products per week, were 45% less likely to develop prostate cancer. There are

also compelling evidences, considered statistically significant, that suggest links between tomatoes and lower risks in the development of cancer of the colon, rectum, esophagus, pancreas, mouth, breast and cervix, besides prostate. The amazing antioxidant in tomatoes is called lycopene, which is more abundant in cooked or processed tomatoes (like ketchup) than in raw tomatoes. A cup of tomato juice provides 25mg of lycopene, the recommended daily "dose." Ten tablespoons of ketchup give 27 mg, and one cup of tomato soup, 9.7 mg, and one medium-size raw tomato, 1 to 4 mg only.

What are the other natural foods that prevent cancer?

Fruits and vegetables in general have powerful antioxidants in them that reduce the risk of cancer. Broccoli, beans, lettuce, bokchoy, strawberry, oranges, papaya, pineapple, kiwi, watermelon, langka, and all the other leafy vegetables and fruits are anti-cancer to a great extent. But unless we eat them daily, they won't work. Foods high in fiber, like bran, wheat, oat meal, beans, grains (couscous, quinoa), not only lower cholesterol and good for the heart, but they also reduce the risk of cancer. Beans, rich in fiber and protein, are a good substitute for red meat. Of course, abstinence from animal fats, tobacco and alcohol are essential. And so with avoidance of chemical pollutants, radiation exposure and UV rays from sunlight.

Does exercise reduce cancer risk?

Yes. Physical exercises does not only control body weight and lower cholesterol but also

reduces the risk of cancer.

So what is a sound anti-cancer strategy?

There are several behavioral and lifestyle changes we can do to lower or prevent cancer, and many of these changes are common sense and practical measures. But, as I stated earlier, first, we must have the discipline, determination and resolve. Then, we must religiously implement our strategy.

One incentive to stay healthy and well are our loved ones. If our self-gratifying bad habits and lifestyle should kill us, it will be a tragedy for us, but it will be an even greater tragedy for our family and loved ones. The emotional, psychological, social and financial devastation that will befall our loved ones when we die is horrendous, to say the least. So, we cannot afford to be so selfish and so self-centered as to allow this to happen. Let us take good care of our body and mind. Let us grow old and happy with our loved ones.

A safe and sound cancer prevention strategy includes all of the following regimen: (1) abstinence from tobacco (2) eating fish and a high-fiber, low-fat, diet (with a lot of fruits, vegetables, whole-grain, bran, etc.) instead of red meat; (3) taking multivitamins; (4) doing regular physical exercises for an hour at least four times a week; (5) avoidance of exposure to too much sunlight, polluted air, agents like asbestos, household chemicals in our home environment or workplace; and, (6) limiting alcohol ingestion to one or two drinks a day. In short,

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stay away from carcinogens and live a healthy life-style through self-discipline.

So, if you are serious about reducing your risk for cancer, do not look for a miracle pill or juice, lotion or potion. Starting today, make some simple changes in your lifestyle as we have suggested above. You'll be amazed how this could change your life and those of your loved ones, for the better.

Sounds simple and inexpensive? You bet. Try it. You may even live to appreciate the benefits from your sacrifices of today on your 100th birthday.

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Author's Notes: The main objective of this column is to educate and inspire people live a healthier lifestyle to prevent illnesses and disabilities, and achieve a happier and more productive life. Any diagnosis, recommendation or treatment in our article are general medical information and not intended to be applicable or appropriate for anyone. This column is not a substitute for your physician, who knows your condition well and who is your best ally when it comes to your health.

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