

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW TO HELP YOU BEAT CANCER

# i c o n

2007 issue 1

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# Food for thought

## How Healthy Eating Can Have Positive Impact on Cancer Prognosis.

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*Alyssa Burns-Hill, MSc, FRSH, MIHPE is the resident Hormone Health Specialist at Bio Vitality Limited, the Guernsey-based hormone health company. She has a Master's degree in health, is a published author and works with the media and regularly speaks at local and national events. She is also the Hormone Health Expert for the Complementary Medical Association and Today's Therapist. In 2001 Alyssa was diagnosed with invasive breast cancer and, following a huge programme of research and soul-searching, she chose a more natural route to healing, avoiding the drugs and radiotherapy. The mainstay of that approach has been natural hormone balancing.*

*Bio Vitality has a CPD Approved Hormone Masterclass for CAM practitioners, which includes hormone testing. Here is Alyssa's story.*

**A** new study from the University of North Carolina has provided more evidence about a link between breast cancer survival times and weight around the middle. 48% of the women taking part in this study were more likely to die during its course of 9 years if they were overweight and the risks increased with the amount a woman was overweight.

Breast cancer is always treated as a sex hormone cancer whose main protagonist is undoubtedly oestrogen, hence the usual prescriptions for Tamoxifen and the aromatase inhibitor, Arimidex, for the hormone-sensitive tumours (most breast cancers are hormone-sensitive). (This new study also comes at a time when an FDA (Federal Drug Administration in the USA) advisory panel has recommended that a warning label be added to Tamoxifen. The warning is that post-menopausal women might be at a higher risk of a breast cancer recurrence if they take Tamoxifen.)

As a breast cancer survivor of five years, I was reluctant to accept this reductionist view of cancer and opted for a hormone balancing and immune boosting approach instead. Yes, that's

instead, not as well as! I said no to the drugs and radiotherapy so I am relieved to see that other factors are starting to be taken into account by medicine.

### What does abdominal weight gain tell us?

Abdominal weight gain can often be a visible indicator of insulin resistance, a problem that is estimated to affect up to 80% of the population. Insulin is one of our main hormones and controls almost every aspect of growth and our metabolism, so its role in our health and well-being shouldn't be easily dismissed.

Insulin resistance occurs when we continually bombard our bodies with sugary foods, which are turned into glucose of the quick influx variety. As these levels escalate in the body the insulin moves in to start to transport the glucose into the cells for energy or to be stored as fat. But in time, and with a highly refined diet of processed foods and sugar-hits to keep energy levels up, the body's ability to keep dealing with these high levels of glucose wears out and the cell receptors literally become resistant to its charms. Meanwhile, the pancreas (where insulin is made) keeps receiving messages to send out more insulin to deal with ever incoming and increasing levels of blood glucose. It's a downward spiral and one that ends up promoting the formation of fat, amongst other health risks, and there's even a link with Alzheimer's Disease.

Insulin is also known to fuel cancer growth because insulin receptors are so concentrated on cancer cells! Insulin will stimulate the division of cells and the activation of genes and the prolonged exposure to high levels, in insulin resistance, will actually change the genetic behaviour of cells. An elevated level of insulin is known to increase the risk of colon, liver, pancreatic, endometrial and breast cancer. In contrast, animal studies have shown that tumours do not grow, or grow poorly, in underfed, calorie-restricted regimes.

## So, why isn't insulin resistance testing standard protocol for cancer patients?

Cancer patients are often told to leave things to their doctors - there's nothing they can do. (I know I was!) Yet, a good diet that is not full of sugar can contribute so much to a person's strength and vitality when going through cancer.

A simple, low-cost finger-prick test can establish insulin resistance and proper guidance from a knowledgeable nutritionist on a healthy diet will, without question, provide the tools to combat insulin problems. This approach will not interfere with any cancer treatments and will probably enhance them. It will also allow patients to feel active and involved in their own health outcome, which has enormous benefits on the healing journey. But, most importantly, from the mounting evidence, this will also improve a cancer patient's prognosis.

Bio-Vitality provides advanced medical testing of hormones that includes reporting, which is easy for all to understand. Reports can include a complementary or natural protocol to support hormone balance. Samples provided in the comfort of your own home via saliva or finger-prick blood samples - it really couldn't be easier!

*Phone or write for your FREE catalogue and Hormones & Health Newsletter*

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