

## **A politically-charged message from Dr. Fuhrman about breast cancer**

Christina Applegate's diagnosis of breast cancer at age 36, brings to our awareness the question, why now, after so many millions spent on cancer research, do so many women still get and die of breast cancer? This diagnosis in such a young celebrity will incite a new media frenzy for more donations for cancer research. Cancer research means more testing for new drugs. I doubt any significant reduction in cancer deaths will result as long as we ignore causation and still expect to discover new poisons to defeat cancer. Deaths from breast cancer have increased throughout the last century and modern medical care has done little to halt this trend.

Imagine if that money was instead spent on educating the public about the environmental and nutritional causes of cancer. We could slash breast cancer rates by 70 to 90 percent if the money that went to cancer research (almost exclusively drug research) instead went to fund a huge publicity campaign to beat cancer at its roots.

**How many people know, childhood diets are the main cause of adult cancers?** I have studied this subject for years, read thousands of studies and wrote a book about it (*Disease-Proof Your Child*). However, I learned not many people care about this subject. Knowledge about real cancer prevention is not politically correct and the spread of this message is unlikely to happen as the social, economic and political climate in the modern world revolves around promotion of processed foods and dairy products as the center of childhood nutritional practices. It is blasphemy to produce scientific studies that expose our present day feeding practices as cancer-causing. This message is not what people want to hear, they want a magic pill. Information about cancer causation does not fly in the media.

Flip around the dial, listen to the discussions about cancer in the media and read the articles. Do any of them bring up diet as the cause of cancer? Do the television personalities discuss that over 60 percent of food consumed in America is junk food? That's right, we have crossed over the 60 percent line, white flour, (pasta, bagels, crackers) sweeteners, oils, chips, processed cereals, soft drinks and other junk foods are the vast majority of what we eat. Add cheese and other dairy foods, full of hormones and saturated fat, and you have a simple formula to create the cancer explosion we have seen in the modern world over the last 75 years. Put low micronutrient, high glycemic carbohydrates together with lots of cheese in your child's mouth and boom, watch the cancer-creating experiment unfold (it usually takes about 40 years).

Now, while articles tussle with the argument of whether breast MRI's or mammograms are more appropriate as an early detection tool, those in the know realize that there is no such thing as early detection and all cancers diagnosed with radiographic techniques must be large enough to be visualized with the human eye, so they have been there more than 10 years already.

When Christina Applegate's publicist reports "it was not serious and caught in the early stage" we know that is not factual. Present medical science has no way of determining whether cells have spread outside the breast. A stage zero cancer means that it less than 2 centimeters, and no cancer were found in the lymph nodes. However that still does not tell us that it was caught before cancer cells have spread. Most invasive breast cancers have seeded the body with cells by the time a mammogram or MRI can detect it. Negative lymph nodes on a biopsy does not tell us

the cancer is still localized to the breast because a small number of cells are for practical purposes invisible.

There are both aggressive and non-aggressive breast cancers. It was not announced which type Ms. Applegate has, but the more aggressive breast cancers are more common in young women. They spread out from the breast at an earlier stage. Ductal carcinoma in situ (DCIS) is a non-invasive breast cancer that spreads locally and there is no significant advantage to early detection because these cancers are not generally life threatening and can be detected later when they are larger with a good prognosis. Hopefully Christina has this type. Infiltrating ductal carcinoma is an example of breast cancer that is more aggressive.

Genetics plays a minor role, not the major role. Dietary practices have been identified by scientific studies as the primary cause of breast cancers. The countries with the highest incidence of cancers of the breast are in North America, Western Europe and Australia, while in contrast, the occurrence is lowest in Southeast Asia<sup>1</sup>. For example, when compared to the United States, Laos, Cambodia, and Thailand have only one-twentieth the amount of breast cancer in the 50-75 age bracket. Breast and Prostate cancer are the most prevalent cancers in America.

Diets lower in animal products (especially cheese) and higher in unrefined plant foods account for these dramatic differences. When people from a low risk country migrate to the United States, their cancer rate increases considerably and the cancer rate in their offspring jumps up to match other Americans. This demonstrates that the lower incidence of these cancers is not due to a lower genetic susceptibility in Asians, but rather due to the exposure to Western dietary practices<sup>2</sup>. Plant-derived micronutrients reduce toxic stress and arm the body's defenses against cancer.

The growing body, with its dividing cells, is at greater risk when exposed to all types of negative and toxic influences. In adults, our valuable genetic material (DNA) is wound up in a tight ball, like the rubber bands on the inside of a golf ball. When we are young and cells are replicating and growing, the DNA unwinds, exposing more of its surface. This makes it more susceptible to damage from toxic exposure. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, infants and toddlers have a ten times greater cancer risk than adults when exposed to gene-damaging chemicals<sup>3</sup>. In a similar manner, an unhealthy diet can do substantially more damage to a young body than an adult one. The fact is, the earlier in life, the greater the potential for damage.

The idea that eating an anti-cancer diet in our childhood is more important in determining cancer risk than waiting to eat healthy as an adult, has been tested in animals by Dr. Jerald Silverman of the Comprehensive Cancer Center at Ohio State with a grant from the American Institute for Cancer Research. He chose to study a strain of mice very susceptible to breast cancer. He put one group on a diet low in fat their entire lives and with the other group he switched them from a high fat diet to a healthier low fat one at different times; some before puberty, some at puberty and some after puberty. The study showed the same thing we see in human studies; those mice fed the high fat diet early in life had more cancer and more of the cancer spread to the lung, and the earlier the change to the healthier lower fat diet the better the mice fared.

The things we are exposed to earlier in life are crucial to our later health. If a nuclear power plant exploded nearby, dousing us all in heavy radiation, it would not cause a

significant increase in cancer occurrence for at least 30 years. For example, the excess risk for breast, prostate and colon cancer among atomic bomb survivors in Hiroshima and Nagasaki continues to be observed today, and persists throughout the lifetime of the survivors. The largest grouping of the radiation-related cancer deaths for these common cancers occurred in the period from 1986 to 1990, forty to forty five years after exposure<sup>4</sup>.

Recent studies have also found fruit eating during childhood had powerful effects to protect against cancer in later life. A 60-year study of 4,999 participants found those who consumed more fruit in their childhood (highest quartile) were 38 percent less likely to develop cancer of all types as adults<sup>5</sup>. There is much more here and the science is fascinating. I could go on and on with hundreds of more studies, telling this story, of food and other factors initiating cancer, but the point is--we already know enough about how to beat breast cancer. We can implement good science to win the war on cancer. We can do it now. We must eat right America. For adults at risk or who already have cancer, nutritional excellence is a critical intervention one can use to reduce risk and significantly increase the chance of survival.

Eat a high-nutrient, vegetable-based diet as described in my books, *Eat To Live* and *Eat For Health*. Green vegetables are the most powerful anti-breast cancer food. Take note that a vegetarian diet does not show protection against breast cancer as much as a diet rich in green vegetables, berries, and seeds. It is the phytochemical nutrient density and diversity of the diet that offers the most dramatic protection against cancer, not merely the avoidance of meat or fat.

Learn more about the best ways to prevent breast cancer and the debate over mammograms in [Dr. Fuhrman's Healthy Times Newsletter #13, May 2004](#). Dr. Fuhrman is a board certified family physician and specialist in nutritional medicine. Visit him at [DrFuhrman.com](#). To comment on this article, check out Dr. Fuhrman's blog [DiseaseProof.com](#).

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