

Macrobiotic View of Cancer

Herman Aihara

Basically, cancer is a cell sickness. Infectious illnesses take place outside of the cell, cancer happens inside the cell. When a normal cell changes to a malignant cell, cancer has started. In my opinion, the malignant cell is caused by a too-acidic condition of the body fluid. This acidic condition is caused by carcinogens, chemicals in food, environmental factors, and emotional conditions.

When life started in the ocean a billion years ago, ocean water was acidic. There was more carbon dioxide than oxygen in the water. Under this acidic condition, primitive unicellular organisms lived. Then, the ocean gradually changed to an alkaline condition, and the cells living there changed to the kind of cells that comprise our human body. Our body cells live and function best when the body fluids are in a slightly alkaline state. If body fluids become too acidic, cells die. However, if the body fluids become slightly acidic, the conditions are not such that the cells die, but the cells' DNA changes in order to allow them to survive under the slightly acidic conditions. This, in my opinion, is the beginning of malignancy, the initiation of cancer.

There are two bodily causes of the initiation of cancer: one is eating too much fatty foods which blocks the capillaries and the other is weak kidneys which cannot completely clean up the acidic wastes of body metabolism. Initiated cancer cells can remain in the body without growing unless they are fed the

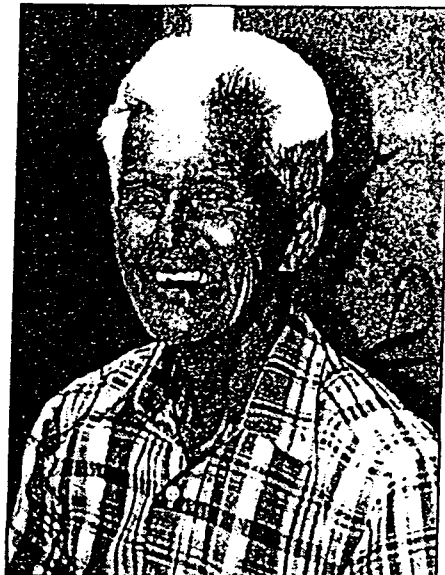


photo by Kathy Ligon

Herman Aihara

substances which make them grow. You might have malignant cells but if they don't grow, you don't notice them. You can carry malignant cells for twenty-five years without their growing. What makes initiated malignant cells grow?

There are three factors that make malignant cells grow. First, eating too much protein, especially animal protein. Animal protein provides cell building material, so if you eat excess animal protein, malignant cells grow more easily. Second, eating sugar, sweeteners, or fruit which give cells energy to grow. Third, eating too much fat — fat gives energy for cells to grow also. This is why

macrobiotic dietary recommendations for individuals who have cancer suggest a low- but sufficient-protein and low-fat diet with no simple sugar.

Once cancer has started, be very careful of sugar and fruit. This includes organic fruits and juices, barley malt syrup, rice syrup, maple syrup, and amasake. Once, at Vega, there was a student with cancer who had been very careful for two months. She had almost recovered from cancer. Then, one day she ate watermelon. The cancer growth began immediately, and the next day she was swollen and in pain. She had heard many people say, "Don't worry about fruit, fruit is OK, fruit is natural, it's good for you." She tried it because she liked it, and the cancer grew back again because fruits have fruit sugar. Fruit sugar, fructose, is a very simple sugar like glucose. It immediately gives energy to cancer cells. It supplies energy to cancer cells even faster than white sugar. Only after one is in a very strong and healthy condition and the doctor has given a "no more cancer" diagnosis, can a little fruit be taken.

In my opinion, malignant cells never return to normal. However, they do die out and leave the body. So one must continue to eat very carefully, even after cancer has been cured. This gives the body a chance to have all malignant cells die out and leave the body. This takes seven to eight years. There are many reports of individuals who ate a macrobiotic diet for several years and whose cancer disappeared according to

medical tests. Unfortunately, many of these people assumed that their cancer was completely gone and they returned to their former way of eating, eating in restaurants, or they began eating plenty of gourmet-style natural food thinking that they could eat rich food again. Quite a few discovered that their cancer returned after eating this way for awhile. Some were able to return to a healthy condition by eating simple macrobiotic food again, others were not so fortunate.

Macrobiotic Dietary Recommendations for Cancer Conditions

I have developed the following adjustments of the general macrobiotic diet to make it more appropriate for someone who has cancer:

1. Take low, but adequate amounts of protein. About 15-20 grams per day are available from whole grains, vegetables, and miso soup. Because excess protein can make cancer grow, I suggest the monthly diet contain aduki (azuki) beans only, and those only twice per month. All other beans, tofu, and tempeh should be avoided. If the person becomes weak or tired, a small amount of fish may be consumed once a week. All other animal food, including all dairy food and eggs, should be strictly avoided. Scitan may be used one time per week, if desired.

2. Consume a small amount of fat (one teaspoonful of sesame oil per day).

3. Eat plenty of high-complex-carbohydrate foods (50-60 percent of total energy). This will come mainly from whole grains.

4. Eat whole natural foods. The macrobiotic diet supplies plenty of vitamins from whole grains, vegetables, and sea vegetables. The macrobiotic way does not support the use of dietary supplements. They do not contain all of the necessary ingredients to properly metabolize protein, fat, and carbohydrates. Only natural whole foods contain the right proportion of vitamins to support healthy digestion and metabolism.

5. Make sea vegetables a regular part

of your diet. Sea vegetables provide many alkaline-forming elements such as calcium and magnesium. Since minerals such as these are the main factors which determine whether a food is yin or yang or acid-forming or alkaline-forming, the macrobiotic diet, which contains many minerals, will make it easy to balance these factors.

6. Use special foods such as gomashio (sesame salt), umeboshi pickles, rice bran pickles, tekka, miso, soy sauce (shoyu, tamari), and good quality sea salt in order to alkalize and yangize the body fluids. It is important to maintain alkalinity of the body fluids for proper cell function and health maintenance.

It is important to use these condiments regularly without using them excessively. Excess use will create strong cravings for excess liquid, fruits, sweets, protein, fats, and overeating. Sea salt, miso, and soy sauce should be used in cooking rather than put on cooked food at the table. In cooking, they are used to bring out the naturally sweet flavors of grains, vegetables, and sea vegetables, rather than to create a salty taste. If your grain, vegetable, and sea vegetable dishes taste salty, you are probably using too much of these seasonings or you are using too much of the other condiments listed above. Miso soup is the one dish which should taste a little salty.

7. Drink as little as possible. Drink warm kukicha tea mainly, rather than plain water, iced, or cold drinks. Most doctors commonly advise their patients to drink as much as possible. I suggest just the opposite. This difference comes from the fact that most Americans consume a diet with about 43 percent fat. This high-fat diet makes the blood plasma sticky, which tends to raise the blood pressure. In order to reduce blood pressure, doctors recommend drinking a lot of water. The macrobiotic diet contains about 15 percent fat, so eating a macrobiotic diet, the blood does not require thinning in order to properly run through the arteries, veins, and capillaries.

Not drinking much liquid concentrates nutrients and oxygen in the blood plasma so that less circulation is required to supply these substances to the

body's 60 trillion cells. This takes a burden off the heart and kidneys.

8. Eat cooked food primarily. Cooking has three purposes: One is to change raw foods and render them more digestible, especially whole grains. Secondly, cooking ionizes minerals in the foods, especially sodium chloride, so that minerals can be absorbed into the cell and intercellular fluids. Without cooking, the minerals present in the foods and seasonings will not be absorbed by the kidneys. Thirdly, cooked food makes the body fluids more yang, which increases the ability to attract oxygen. This allows for proper blood/cell production by making possible the transmutation of magnesium found in chlorophyll into iron.

9. Use an appropriate amount of salt. One of the biggest differences between macrobiotic dietary principles and most dietary suggestions is the recommendation and use of salt in the macrobiotic diet. This difference comes from the misunderstanding that salt causes heart disease and high blood pressure. Salt does not cause heart disease and high blood pressure if one does not consume much fat (more than 30 percent of energy intake). The basic cause of heart disease, stroke, heart attack, and high blood pressure is a high consumption of fat. Fat molecules clog up the tiny capillaries and make cholesterol deposits in the artery wall. This is the basic cause of heart disease. When such fat clogging happens, salt may cause increased pressure, but if there is no high-fat intake, this will not happen. Therefore, salt reduction without fat reduction does not cure heart troubles.

The main reason I recommend salt in the diet is that sodium is the most yang alkaline-forming element and it will strengthen the immune system and prevent further complication of infection such as candida, gonorrhea, syphilis, herpes, AIDS, etc.

When one has cancer cells, one tends to have a weak immune system and become easily infected by bacteria and viruses. These infections weaken the body and cancer will be more likely to develop. Therefore, one must keep the immune system strong. However, most cancer patients have weak kidneys and

cannot maintain sufficient sodium in the body fluids to keep a naturally alkaline condition of 0.85 percent sodium concentration. If the sodium concentration is under the 0.85 percent level, microbes grow more and steal the body cells' glucose and oxygen and that makes the normal cells weak. If such a person takes salt, the weak kidneys just reject it through urination. Therefore, it is most important that a person with weak kidneys increases the salt concentration of the body fluids. This has to be done without taking more salt in the diet (which might further weaken the kidneys). I recommend the following routines for people who have cancer, especially if they have weak kidneys:

Strengthening the Kidneys

A. Apply ginger compresses over the kidneys, 2-3 times per week.

B. Walk barefoot, when weather allows, in the early morning on dew-covered grass.

C. Reduce salt intake.

D. Take a sauna daily except in cases of weakness or tiredness. Remain in the sauna until sweat comes. Saunas melt fat and wash it out through sweat. When excess fat is melted, the skin can better aid the body in removal of waste products. This will help the kidney function by giving the kidneys a little rest and allowing them to gradually restore their strength.

E. Take a bath in a 1 percent salt solution (1 pound of salt for every 12 gallons of water). Stay there for 20-30 minutes every other day. The water should not be too hot. You can use water-softener salt which is available in 50-pound bags in most supermarkets at a low price. Macrobiotic cooking salt is too expensive for salt baths. Epsom salts cannot be used for this salt bath because they do not contain sodium chloride.

□

Herman Aihara is founder and senior teacher at the Vega Study Center in Oroville, California. Thanks to David Briscoe for help in preparing this article.