

Safety of herbs & nutrients during cancer treatment

Complimentary medicine is frequently used by cancer patients and therefore it is important that patients and carers are aware of the risks and benefits involved. The use of natural medicine has increased dramatically over the past few years. This is partly because of increased access to natural health information and products, as well as the growth of research-based evidence supporting the effectiveness of natural medicine. A number of medicinal herbs and specific nutrients have proven to be very beneficial and safe during cancer treatment. I would like to give some examples on herbs and nutrient that are of great benefit to all cancer patients.

St. Mary's Thistle (*Silybum marianum*) seeds

This well-known liver protective herb has anti-oxidant and liver restorative properties, which makes it a valuable remedy for all cancer patients that are undergoing Chemotherapy.

Here are some examples on the action of St. Mary Thistle

- Protects the liver from toxic effects of chemotherapy drugs
- Helps remove toxic residues as a result from chemotherapy
- Reduces toxic side effects
- Improves the outcome of chemotherapy

Taken at the correct dosage, St. Mary's Thistle is perfectly safe to use during chemotherapy. However, if taken in too high doses, St. Mary's Thistle can interfere with chemotherapy, therefor should only be prescribed by a qualified natural health practitioner.

The best and safest way to take St. Mary's Thistle is as food. Simply roast the seeds in a pan or the oven, and sprinkle on salad or sandwiches. That way you will get the protective properties of this wonderful remedy, without running the risk of over dosing.



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Withania – Ashwaganda (*Withania somniferum*) root

This remarkable remedy is an absolute must for all cancer patients. Again this herb is perfectly safe to take throughout cancer treatment. Studies have shown that Withania improves the outcome of radiation therapy by making cancer cells more reactive to the treatment. It significantly increases white blood cell count, reducing leukopenia caused by radiation therapy and immune suppressive drugs. Withania boosts iron levels and increases stamina and energy. It is a wonderful tonic herb that helps cancer patients recover quicker after their treatment.

Essential Fatty Acid

Certain fats are essential to maintain healthy cell membranes. As the development of cancer is linked to the uncontrolled growth of abnormal cells, we need to protect the cells from any further damage.

Our body cannot produce essential fatty acids that are required for healthy cell function. This is why a daily intake of specific oils that are rich in essential fatty acids is of great importance for all cancer patients.



Flaxseed oil is rich in alpha-linolenic acid (ALA), and other related omega 3 fatty acids such as EPA rich **fish oil**, **evening primrose** and **borage oil** all contain gamma-linolenic acid (GLA), a substance found to kill tumour cells and reduce tumour growth. ALA in particular has shown significant anti-cancer properties against breast cancer. Low levels of ALA are also a valuable indicator to identify the spread of breast cancer. Flaxseed oil is best taken

alongside protein rich food, which changes the structure of flaxseed, allowing it to enter cancer cells and destroying them from the inside out.

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Omega 3 fatty acids, found in oily fish, nuts and seeds, increase the number of T lymphocytes, and that way improve the immune response in people with solid tumours.

- Daily recommended dose min. 1.5g per day (EPA/DHA)
- Improves the outcome of chemo and radiation therapy
- Reduces growth of cancer



Zinc

Zinc has strong healing and immune boosting properties, and can be found in nuts and seeds. Clinical studies confirmed that a daily intake of 75mg Zinc can greatly reduce occurrence of mouth ulcer during and after cancer therapy. Have your zinc levels checked first, before supplementing with high doses to avoid toxic side effects.

Until next time

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Connie Page is a Medical Herbalist and runs a busy Clinic in Peregrin Beach on the Sunshine Coast. She has a special interest in Natural Cancer Support, and enjoys sharing her knowledge with the wider community. Connie is a popular speaker, and runs workshops to educate people on the safe and effective use of medicinal herbs. All cancer patients receive a **FREE** initial **consultation** from Connie. Call her now to find more.