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Heal cancer with herbs

While cancer is steadily on the rise, there are many who have brought their illness into remission with simple lifestyle changes including plant-based diets, exercise and a positive attitude, says **Melissa Nazareth**

Jaishree Kannan's life took a turn 10 years ago when she was diagnosed with ovarian cancer. After going through surgery and many rounds of chemotherapy, the doctor told her that she was fine and would need only regular check-ups. Unfortunately, the cancer relapsed within nine months and this time, her body could not take the strain of surgery or chemo. "I was forced to look for alternative methods to deal with my illness and the side effects of chemo," she says.

While researching online, Jaishree stumbled upon SHARAN (Sanctuary for Health and Reconnection to Animals and Nature), an organisation devoted to spreading awareness about holistic health and an ecologically sustainable, compassionate lifestyle. "Their website highlighted the importance of eating whole plant-based foods to reverse illnesses, which gave me hope. During the same time, my acupressure therapist encouraged me to drink green smoothies. Until then, I had never eaten a raw vegetable in my life!"

Jaishree started consuming fruit (on an empty stomach), green juices, and salads. Though she and her family were initially apprehensive of this change because usually one is advised not to eat raw food during chemotherapy, she took the risk. "Within a couple of days, I started feeling better and my mouth ulcers disappeared too," she says. Jaishree has been cancer free for the last 10 years and wholeheartedly recommends SHARAN's whole plant-based diet to everyone.

Dr Nandita Shah founded SHARAN in 2005 with the vision of helping people, in India and worldwide, to connect with animals and nature in order to heal themselves and the planet. Brought up a vegetarian, she took the vegan path in 1985 when she learnt about the inherent cruelty of the dairy industry. "Animal meat and products are filled with harmful drugs including antibiotics, growth promoters, prostaglandins and a concentration of pesticide residues," she says. "80 per cent of the antibiotics produced globally are fed to animals. Dairy farmers try to control mastitis (udder inflammation) with huge doses of antibiotics, which also end up in the milk. These antibiotics inhibit the development of the immune system, and cause antibiotic resistance,

particularly in children.” Estrogen and progesterone hormones are also present in milk and can promote breast and prostate cancers. In most places in India, cows eat from garbage cans that are dumped with lead batteries, plastic bags and other toxic substances that translate to poisons in the milk. A seven-year study of pesticide residues in milk in 12 Indian states by the Indian Council of Medical Research in 1994, found that a high proportion of milk food samples — bovine, human and other — had residues of pesticides HCH and DDT above government-established tolerance limits. They also found arsenic, cadmium and lead which cause cancer, kidney damage, heart disease and brain damage. These days, thanks to modern farming techniques, the level of pesticides is only higher. A recent survey also found highly carcinogenic, cancer causing plastic in cows’ rumens (stomachs).



Rachna Chhachhi has reversed people’s cancer by completely overhauling their lifestyle

Holistic healing and lifestyle change

Nutritional Therapist and Certified Cancer Coach Rachna Chhachhi, usually advises patients to eliminate wheat, milk and milk products, from their diet and concentrate more on raw items if the digestive system can take it. “Raw items boost good gut bacteria that repair the stomach lining stripped due to low immunity, high cancer cells and side effects of medication,” she says, adding that they also aid release of toxins, hence strengthening the immune system. “The list of raw items I advise, changes as per the cancer type,” says Rachna who believes that cancer reversal depends on a holistic healing process driven by 100 per cent lifestyle change. “I also prescribe specific exercises, pranayamas and guided meditation techniques, as well as eight to nine hours of sleep every day.” Rachna goes on to highlight that getting rid of emotional toxicity plays a major role in helping patients recover.

Even SHARAN advocates veganism for much more than just physical health benefits. Through working closely with people having various backgrounds and pasts, the SHARAN team has observed that whole plant-based foods bring about a positive difference in emotional health too, paving the way for personal and spiritual growth.

Popular Bollywood actress Manisha Koirala was diagnosed with ovarian cancer almost five years ago and she underwent chemotherapy. While she was declared cancer free, her chance of cancer recurrence

was 90 per cent due to genetic mutation. She sought out Rachna to follow her recommended diet and lifestyle changes to reduce the chances of recurrence. This December, Manisha will complete five years of being cancer free. Koirala actively evangelises Rachna’s practice and online health consultancy ‘Ask Rachna Chhachhi’.

Dr Vinay Kumar Singh of Mumbai-based Ayurcure, an ayurvedic centre that treats a range of illnesses including cancer, recommends healthy lifestyle habits like morning walks and pranayama for better healing. Highlighting the importance of emotional wellbeing, he adds that one must avoid stress and anger because they build toxicity in the body. Further, he advises a complete vegetarian diet for his patients. “Light vegetarian foods like *moong dal khichdi*, rice and *saag*, green vegetable soup and seasonal fruits are easy to digest,” he says. 24 year old Nitu Singh, one of his patients, was suffering from abdominal CA (carbohydrate antigen, a protein found on the surface of certain cancer cells). It had spread all over her abdominal area, causing severe pain. Nitu was relieved of her pain after just two of Ayurcure’s ayurvedic doses. Further, she was completely cured



Beetroot and vegan cheese salad

Serves 3-4

Ingredients

2 beetroots, chopped in cubes
60gm black olives, halved and pitted
40gm salad leaves (lettuce or rocket)
60gm vegan cheese (tofu ricotta)

For the dressing

Juice of 2 lemons
1 garlic clove, crushed
Salt and pepper to taste

Method

Steam the chopped beetroot until tender. In a bowl, mix the beetroot, olives and salad leaves. Prepare dressing in a separate bowl by mixing crushed garlic, lemon juice and salt and pepper. Add the dressing to the salad veggies and toss well. Top with vegan cheese.

Recipe by SHARAN (www.sharan-india.org)

within six months of following Ayurcure's recommended diet and lifestyle changes, and has been cancer free ever since. 45 year old Shefali Sharma was suffering from breast cancer, and though she had sought medical treatment earlier, she hadn't been completely cured. She too consulted Ayurcure particularly for her uterine bleeding problem, and was completely healed with ayurvedic doses, and diet and lifestyle change within just four months.

Herbal formulations

Mumbai based Luke Coutinho, MD in Alternative Medicine, and Founder of Pure Nutrition, prescribes pure plant based formulations and oils for a range of ailments including cancer. Curcumin supplements, for instance, have anti-cancer and anti-inflammatory properties; cold pressed virgin

coconut oil boosts immunity and energy levels during cancer treatment; Progut Plus made from apple cider vinegar, an alkalizing substance rich in probiotics and prebiotics, improves gut health, which boosts immunity. "We administer supplements on a case by case basis," says Luke, adding that patients currently undergoing chemotherapy are prescribed formulations for protection from radiation and its ill effects. Further, super foods like Ganoderma – a reishi (herbal) mushroom, Goji berry – a Himalayan super food, Nigella Max – onion seeds, and many others are also advised as they are anti-cancerous and anti-inflammatory.

"You are wasting your money and time if you are going to buy a formulation and not change your lifestyle," insists Luke who predominantly recommends a vegetarian plant-based diet to cancer patients. "We focus on making the body alkaline, improving gut health as that is equally essential to boost immunity, and incorporating foods that are rich in anti-inflammatory and antioxidants compounds. We also stress on replenishing macronutrients, as well as micronutrients that generally get depleted during treatments like chemotherapy, radiation and hormonal therapy."

Nancy Raja (name changed) is a 50 year old woman who was diagnosed with cancer relapse some months ago. Incidentally, she had been following Luke's videos and decided to approach him. "My energy levels have been great throughout my chemo sessions, and my reports, satisfactory. Luke and his team slowly built up my immune system with a holistic diet and improved lifestyle."

Luke has also been successful in helping patients who chose not to undergo chemotherapy. Rakesh Gupta (name changed) was denied further treatment by his hospital for medical reasons but believes that was a stroke of luck. "I got introduced to Luke and his team and through their programme, realised that our body has the power to treat all illnesses if we nourish it correctly," he says.

Seema Chopra (name changed), diagnosed with cervical pre-cancer, chose not to remove her cervix and uterus (which was completely clean). Only a layer of the cervix was taken off. Consulting Luke and his team of doctors helped her overcome her illness.

Natural healing instincts

That we must depend on external factors like medicines to heal our bodies is conditioning. Of course, sometimes, immediate medical attention is the need of the hour and we must not rule it out. That said, we must listen to our bodies and allow our natural instincts to heal us holistically, addressing not just the symptoms but the root cause.

Retired Col. A K Khanna is a case in point. He approached Rachna with stage III prostate cancer at the age of 74. "I was suffering from urine incontinence (difficulty in passing urine and frequent urination) and went for a checkup; my PSA (prostate-specific antigen) was very high and my prostate gland, enlarged. On biopsy, cancer was confirmed and I was told that metastasis had begun. At first, the doctors advised surgery but finally, referred me to a well-known surgeon who advised against it. He recommended radiation to contain it instead. I was put on anti-androgen drugs and hormone therapy as well. I began with Rachna's treatment before the drugs began, and in 45 days, my PSA was back in range. Despite that, the doctors went ahead with the drugs. Within two months, my prostate gland was back to normal size."

Col. A K Khanna debated with Rachna on radiation, and she advised against it, saying that he had a weak digestive system and radiation burns the entire area, so his stomach would not be able to take it. "Though I was in agreement with her, my wife was apprehensive as the doctors had told us that my longevity would be reduced without radiation. Just to pacify everyone emotionally, I agreed." Col. Khanna was prescribed 38 sittings, twice a week but within eight sittings, was in pain, unable to pass stool and constipated. "At that time Rachna modified my diet, supplements and pranayamas. Though the doctors kept pushing me for more sittings with relief measures, after 18 sittings, my pain and discomfort were so high that even they agreed that I would not be able to take more radiation."

Col. Khanna decided to stop radiation and religiously followed Rachna's treatment. At 78, he has been cancer free for three years and enjoys a high quality life with great health, energy and attitude.

Nisha Koiri had a similar realisation. She was advised immediate full mastectomy and then chemotherapy and radiation for breast cancer but the prognosis did not convince her. Based on a research, she was shocked to learn how chemotherapy drugs totally destroy the immune system – they kill the cancer cells but not cancer stem cells, and are highly carcinogenic, thus, causing secondary grade cancer in many cases. Nisha also learned that cancer cells are present in each one of us and our immune system keeps them in check right from the time of our birth. "I realised that all I had to do was boost my immune system with the right nutrition to take care of the active cancer cells in my body," she says, adding that

Anti-cancer chutney

Ingredients

- 1 big bunch of coriander leaves
- 3 to 4 garlic cloves
- 2 to 3 green chillies
- 20 raw mamra almonds (in as natural condition as possible)
- 3 to 4 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 1 tbsp mustard oil
- Few curry leaves
- 1 tsp mustard seeds

Method

- Thoroughly wash coriander leaves with tap water, then soak for five minutes in drinking water. Drain and keep aside in a steel sieve to let the water drain out. Add garlic, green chillies, mamra almonds, and extra virgin olive oil in a mixer. Add water to adjust consistency, and churn to form a chutney.
- Peel garlic cloves and chop finely. Heat mustard oil in a small steel or ceramic tadka pan. Add mustard seeds and curry leaves. Let them simmer on high flame for 3 to 4 minutes and switch off the gas. Pour it on the chutney. Add salt and mix well. Serve cold.

Recipe by Rachna Chhachhi

following SHARAN's plant-based diet led to positive thermogram results. "There was no metastasis (malignant growths) and the lumps continue to reduce in size with each check up."

Swati's mother got diagnosed with breast cancer but SHARAN's plant-based diet healed her in just two weeks, and she didn't have to undergo chemotherapy. The diet and lifestyle change also facilitated Swati's weight loss by seven kilograms and reversed all her health issues. "I realised that we carry the power to heal within ourselves," says Swati.

Our bodies are the most beautiful instruments we own; a home for our minds and souls. Did you know that in just 365 days, our body rebuilds itself into something better or worse, depending on how we treat it? Almost every cell in our bodies eventually dies and is replaced by new cells from the food that we eat. Every day is a new opportunity to rebuild your body, so why not start today?



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