

Antioxidants Can Reduce Side Effects and Prolong Survival

This article is based on a study written by Dr. Charles Simone and his colleagues. Dr. Simone is a Medical Doctor, Medical Oncologist, Immunologist, and Radiation Oncologist. He's the author of numerous books on cancer and is the founder of The Simone Protective Cancer Institute.

If you are a cancer patient who has undergone radiation or chemotherapy therapy, there's a pretty good chance you have been advised by a doctor to avoid antioxidant supplements and other nutrients during your treatment. The reason you've likely been given is that these compounds reduce the effectiveness of these therapies and therefore, shorten life spans.

This is not only inaccurate, the opposite is actually true in most cases, says Charles B. Simone, MD, of the Simone Protective Cancer Institute in Lawrenceville, NJ.



Although data dispelling these misconception have been published in the U.S. since the 1970s, "most doctors completely ignore it," says Simone, who led a recently published review* of 50 human studies conducted between 1965 and 2003. The studies were comprised of a total of 8,521 demographically diverse cancer patients.

The review addresses several prevailing assumptions about the use of supplemental antioxidants and other nutrients during chemotherapy and radiation treatment.

The first is that doing these things in tandem shortens patients' lives. However, two-thirds of the 8,521 cancer patients his team studied had increased life spans, Simone says. In one study, patients who could or would not undergo conventional therapies were offered spots in government-sponsored diet studies. These patients lived the same amount of time or longer than those who opted for conventional therapies.

The second misconception is that supplement usage interferes with the physiological workings of chemotherapy and radiation treatments. Again, there has been no evidence that this is the case, says Simone. Instead, antioxidants and nutrients fuel the body for its fight, increasing the number of tumor cells killed by these therapies.

Third, many people believe that patients who take supplemental antioxidants and other nutrients during these traditional therapies suffer from more side effects. But, Simone says, patients consistently have reported experiencing fewer side effects overall.

Simone largely traces the bad press about combining antioxidants with chemo to a 1997 New York Times article in which two physicians from a prominent cancer center "told cancer patients not to take antioxidants and other vitamins while receiving chemotherapy and radiation therapy," he says. "The entire oncology community took the same position without ever reviewing the evidence" - and passed the misinformation along to their patients.

(Simone's practice conducted an unpublished study of 650 consecutive patients within a year's time. 85 percent said they had been told not to take vitamins during treatment. Perhaps more interesting, the majority said they would listen to their doctors before they would believe the scientific evidence.)

"If your doctor tells you not to take antioxidant supplements or nutrients during your treatment, ask him or her to show you the rationale for this decision from a peer-reviewed journal," Simone says. "It cannot be produced because there isn't any."

The bottom line, he says, is that **"our study shows that millions of cancer patients who receive chemotherapy and/or radiation therapy should take antioxidants and other nutrients because there is no interference, there is greater cancer destruction, there are fewer side effects, and about two-thirds of the patients live longer."**

Source:

Simone CB 2nd et al., Antioxidants and Other Nutrients Do Not Interfere with Chemotherapy or Radiation Therapy and Can Increase Kill and Increase Survival, Part 1. Altern Ther Health Med. 2007 Jan-Feb;13(1):22-8.