

Beating Breast Cancer with a Healthy Vegan Diet

By Elaine Sloan

October is National Breast Cancer Month, and I urge women to adopt a low-fat vegetarian diet in order to ward off breast cancer and other dreadful diseases. **I believe my healthy vegan diet has kept me breast-cancer free for 13 years after I was diagnosed with the disease.**

Studies have shown that a low-fat diet can help breast cancer patients ward off new tumors. One study, led by **Rowan T. Chlebowski** of *Harbor-UCLA Medical Center* in Los Angeles, involved more than 2,400 postmenopausal women undergoing treatment for early breast cancer. Some were advised to follow a very low-fat diet, and others to eat a diet higher in fat. After five years, only 9.8 percent of the women on the low-fat diet had a recurrence of cancer, compared with 12.4 percent on the more traditional diet.



There's a strong possibility that the best defense against breast cancer is a naturally low-fat diet, and the best way to go low fat is to go vegan.

Unlike animal products which are high in fat, protein, and hormones, all of which increase cancer risks, vegan foods are generally low in fat and calories, high in fiber and healthy complex carbohydrates, and cholesterol free.

I was devastated when I first learned I had cancer. I didn't know where to turn, who to trust. Before my mastectomy, I ate eggs, cheese, and other dairy products. I knew I had to make some changes in my life to prevent another occurrence in the future. My son, an animal rights advocate and a health-conscious individual, encouraged me to switch to a vegan diet. After reading that high fat diets may well contribute to breast cancer, I knew a significant diet change would be a step in saving my life in the future.

Experts believe that IGF-1, a hormone found in both humans and cows- and therefore in dairy products-contributes to cancer cell growth. A study published in the *Journal of the National Cancer Institute* 2003 showed that **pre-menopausal women who ate a diet high in animal fat-not vegetable fat-had three times the breast cancer rate than women who ate a diet low in animal fat.**

Many other studies and clinical research from leading cancer experts have proved that **animal products also contribute to colon and prostate cancer.** They are also known to **contribute to heart disease, obesity, and diabetes.**

On the contrary, countless studies have shown that vegetarian diets can prevent and even reverse many life-threatening illnesses. As **Dr. William Castelli**, the director of the *Framingham Heart Study*, the longest-running epidemiological study in medical history, has reportedly said, "**Vegetarians have the best diet. They have the lowest rates of coronary disease of any group in the country. ... [T]hey have a fraction of our heart attack rate and they have only 40 percent of our cancer rate.**"

Since I switched to a vegan diet, my energy level has increased, my cholesterol level has decreased, and I feel healthier overall, but the best health benefit is the peace of mind from knowing that I'm much less likely to have a breast cancer relapse.



Elaine Sloan is an active animal rescue volunteer and a member of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, the Humane Society of the United States, and other animal protection organizations.

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