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**CANCER ISSUE
#004**



INTAKE OF CHICKEN, DAIRY AND SOY PRODUCTS TRIGGER RELAPSE OF BREAST CANCER ?

**CLINICAL ONCOLOGIST HELPS YOU TO
UNCOVER TOP 3 BREAST CANCER PATIENTS' DIETARY MYTHS**



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Breast cancer : No. 1 killer in woman is a disease deserved to receive attention beyond every year's breast cancer awareness month. The journey of breast cancer patients fighting against the disease could not be more stressful both physically and mentally. It doesn't make sense to stress these patients on their dietary intake base on non-evidence-based myths which will do more harm to patients' recovery than good. Among the pool of dietary myths for breast cancer patient, chicken has hormones that increase the risk of recurrence; bird's nest can accelerate cell division and promote the growth of cancer cells; Yunzhi and Lingzhi can improve immunity to fight against cancer, etc ranked the top most circulating myths. Are these claims true? It'd be better to have doctor helping to address them one by one.

Clinical Oncologist Dr. Cheung Ming Chee, Michael (named Dr. Cheung thereafter) has unique interpretation of these nutritional myths. It is understandably that breast cancer patients are in fear of wrong intake of food will increase the risk of breast cancer recurrence, interrupt their cancer treatment schedule, or even decrease effectiveness of their treatment. Such believe in minds thus made breast cancer patients more vulnerable to nutritional myths which land them to stop eating chicken, dairy and soy products.



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1. IS CHICKEN, DAIRY AND SOY PRODUCTS-FREE DIET A SURE BET TO REDUCE RELAPSE OF DISEASE?

“So far there is no proven clinical evidence that confirms intake of hormones from food will stimulate growth of cancer cells”, Dr. Cheung said. Chicken meat is indeed a source of high-quality protein. For breast cancer patient with unshakable worries about the non-evidence-based hormones claims, they are advised to buy poultry highlighted bred without growth hormones. Alternatively, they can avoid eating chicken skin and chicken meat rich in subcutaneous fat too. By doing so, it helps avoid excessive calorie intake and absorption of natural hormones of poultry products. It is noted that chicken skin itself does not cause cancer, but constant consumption of grilled or fried chicken may increase the risk of developing cancer.

It is well known that estrogen is one of the risk factors for the development of breast cancer. Interestingly enough, plant-based hormones from soy product has a name bearing the scary word – phytoestrogen which is the cause of misconception that soy product can be “carcinogenic”. However, latest studies have confirmed that phytoestrogen will not increase the risk of developing breast cancer, it’s considered protective nutrients from development of breast cancer instead. Many studies have shown that soy product contains various phytochemicals and active compounds such as saponins, which can lower blood cholesterol, regulate blood sugar levels and prevent cancer as well.

Dairy product is recommended in American Cancer Society's cancer dietary guidelines and Cancer Research UK also indicated that there is not enough evidence to prove dairy products can cause breast cancer. Alternatively, dairy products are highlighted by Cancer Research UK for reducing risk of colon cancer development.

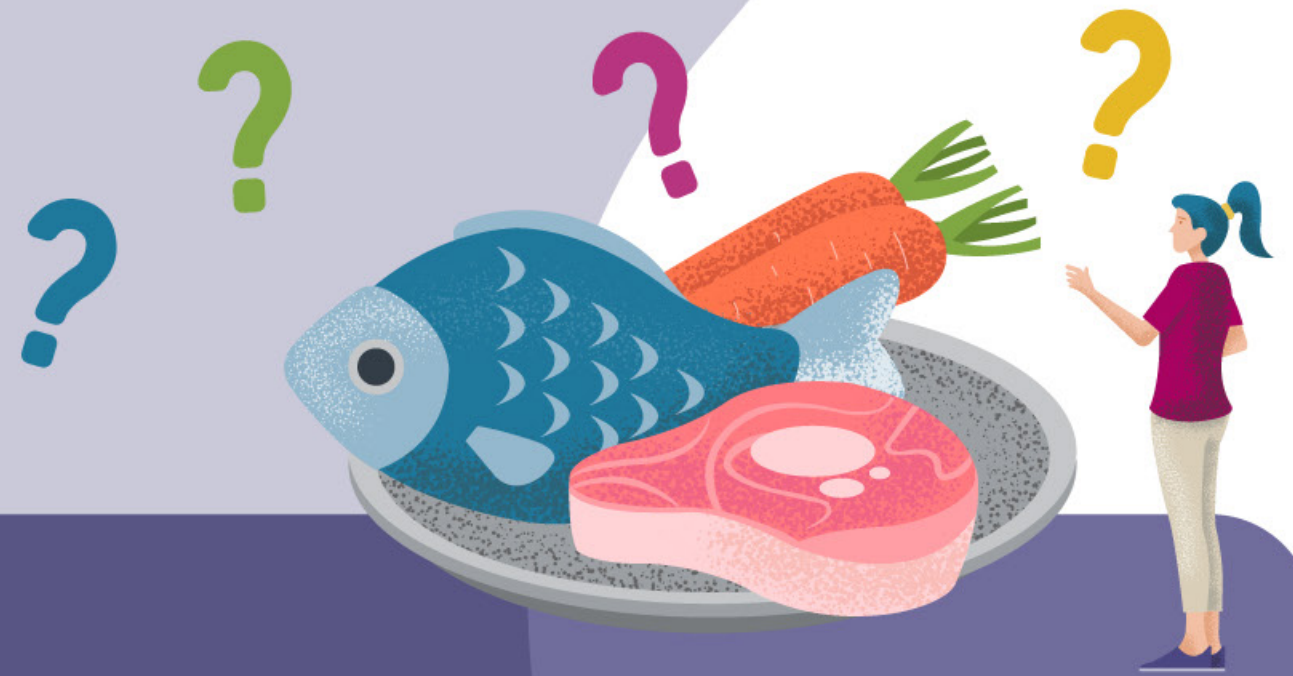
2. TIPS IN JUDGING DIETARY MYTHS

Cut out sugar intake can “starve” cancer cells; sugar-rich food feeds cancer cells are most contagious rumors among cancer patients. Yet, Dr. Cheung reiterated that attempt of cancer patient to cut down intake of sugary food, eat less or on diet can be hazardous practices. So far, there is no clinical research support the claim on ‘cut out of sugar intake can starve cancer cells’. On the contrary, both cancer cells and normal cells like brain cells must rely on glucose to survive and function. Therefore, the human body must maintain an optimal absorption of glucose to ensure our body has sufficient energy supply for daily functions. Cancer patients whose fall short of glucose support will affect the nutritional intake and lead to malnutrition and weight loss. Both will not only damage the body’s immunity and self-healing mechanism, but also affect the progress and effect of cancer treatment.

Thanks to heavy media promotion, “Superfood” like asparagus, five veggie juice, and flaxseed are popular food choices on earth these days. There was a cancer patient who prescribed herself high doses of asparagus (3 times a day) whom resulted in sudden surge in blood potassium level, leading to delay of cancer treatment. As each patient's physical fitness, responses to treatment and health status are different, it is advisable to seek advises from medical profession and/or nutritionist prior to formulation of daily dietary menu.



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3. RECOMMENDED FOOD CHOICES FOR CANCER PATIENT

Dr. Cheung suggested that guiding principle of dietary menu shall be a balanced diet that includes calorie-rich food and protein. That is, one's daily dietary menu shall include carbohydrates, different types of lean meat, vegetables of various colors, small amount of fat, fruit and calorie-rich dairy food.

During cancer patient's treatment, high-protein diet is particularly crucial nutrients to the body. Thus, lean meat, eggs, seafood, fish oil and soy products are all appropriate choices. Cancer patients will not be able to fight against cancer cells if they fail to acquire enough protein. Notably, patient's hematopoietic and repair capabilities will be discounted and eventually affect treatment progress and less susceptible to side effects. Eventually, patient will be looped to a vicious cycle of malnutrition, muscle loss, weakened immunity and increase risk of weight loss.

In terms of minerals intake, foods rich in selenium (e.g garlic, shrimp, beans and fish) have antioxidant effects. Zinc helps in the formation of skin, hair, nails, oral mucosa and wound healing. Vitamin A (carrots, spinach), vitamin C (orange, tomato), and vitamin E (nuts, dark green vegetables) all have different roles in maintaining healthy functioning of the body.

Dietitian recommended recipe for breast cancer patient

FRIENDLY REMINDER

Dietary recommendation for cancer patient is all about balanced and healthy diet, overly bland diet is not advised. However, Dr. Cheung remarked that obesity is one of key breast cancer causing factors, also increase the risk of breast cancer recurrence. Excessive accumulation of fat in the body may trigger the body to produce too much estrogen and insulin, leading to chronic inflammation in the body which causes damage to DNA and promote proliferation of cancer cell. Latest studies indicate that a balanced low-fat diet can reduce the risk of dying from breast cancer in postmenopausal women. Hence, breast cancer patients are advised to adopt low-fat diet to reduce the risk of breast cancer recurrence.

Breakfast : Matcha pancake with fresh fruit, oat milk

Morning snack : Low-fat yogurt with strawberry and banana

Lunch : Mixed Vegetables with Shredded Chicken, Steamed Dumplings

Dinner : Pan-fried saury, cold bean sprouts, kimchi tofu soup, rice with five grains or rice

Afternoon tea / Late night snack : sesame paste tofu flower or nutritious milk

Source : Hong Kong Integrated Oncology Centre

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