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Doctor's House Call



April 1, 2015

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Dear Peter,

Long before I was a physician, I remember mixing baking soda and vinegar in one of my first school science classes and watching it fizz.

Back then, I had no idea how many uses this common household product had.

Aside from fueling science-fair volcanoes, baking soda has long been used to relieve acid reflux and heartburn, as well as to treat allergic reactions from plants.

It is also an effective toothpaste, when combined with hydrogen peroxide.

And these are only a few of the ways it can be used... So it's not surprising that a number of new, hip health fads feature this age-old "cure."

These days, one of the most popular claims is that taking baking soda and other alkaline foods can prevent cancer.

I'm afraid I have bad news: It's another junk-science theory you shouldn't believe.

This theory claims that because cancer cells thrive in an acidic environment, alkaline substances like baking soda will prevent cancerous tumors from growing in your body.

Unfortunately, baking soda won't prevent cancer, and neither will an alkaline diet.

But there may be something else to this baking soda idea as part of a cancer-fighting treatment – and we'll get to that in a minute.

The fact is that this hip theory has got the relationship between acidity and cancer

all wrong.

Let me explain...

The theory claims that the modern, American diet is so loaded with acidifying foods – grains, processed foods, starchy foods and refined sugars – that they increase the body's acidity and create the perfect cancerous tumor-growing environment.

But here's the problem...

While cancer does thrive in acidic environments, it develops and grows perfectly well in the normal, human alkaline environment.

The human body has a narrow pH range that sits between slightly alkaline 7.35 and 7.45. You may remember from school that that a pH reading of below 7 is acidic and above is alkaline. And our bodies have a number of natural ways of keeping it under control, like breathing and urinating.

When researchers study cancer cells, they grow them in a normal human environment of 7.4.¹ *Contrary to the popular thinking behind the baking-soda fad, acidic foods do not cause cancer – instead, it's the cancerous tumors that increase the body's acidity.*

Cancerous tumors burn glucose and increase lactic-acid levels at a feverish rate. As tumors grow, more acid is produced, creating the highly acidic environment.

In this acidic environment, cancer cells grow faster, metastasize and spread to other organs and tissues throughout the body.

A lot of factors cause cancer – free radical damage, radiation, UV rays, chemical toxins and hormone imbalance all damage DNA and disrupt cellular metabolism.

But acidic foods don't cause cancer and baking soda won't prevent it.

Yet there is something important about baking soda and cancer that is worth exploring, and some interesting research backs me up...

Recent studies suggests that baking soda neutralizes blood-acidity in patients who are *already* suffering from cancer.

A Italian study from 2014 suggests baking soda showed promise as a means of controlling tumor growth and the spread of cancer cells to other organs.²

And research from the Moffitt Cancer Center in Tampa, Florida, indicates the alkalizing effect on pH of baking soda could play an important role in slowing cancer cell activity.³

The results of these studies expanded on a successful 2009 study by the University of Arizona Cancer Center. Scientists there took metastatic breast cancer cells and injected them into the mammary fat pads of mice. One group of mice got water with baking soda. The other group didn't.

The cancer spread significantly less in the group of mice with the water and baking soda. And their survival rate was much higher.⁴

My colleague, Dr. Mark Rosenberg, MD, noted recently at a medical conference we attended:

"The result [of the study] was so significant, the data was so compelling that the University of Arizona is now recruiting the first group of patients for a clinical trial. They're treating metastatic breast cancer. One group is getting chemo. The other group is getting chemo plus baking soda, so people ask me, 'Should I take baking soda prophylactically?'"

"I don't have the data to answer that. I can say it doesn't hurt. In my practice, I treat primarily advanced stages of all cancers. And I put my advanced-stage patients all on baking soda."

If you or someone you know has cancer, they should definitely avoid sugary, starchy and acidic processed foods.

And while alkaline foods like beets, broccoli, apples, cantaloupe, almonds, sea salt, and spinach won't prevent cancer, it appears that baking soda and alkaline foods may help the body fight against the acidifying effects of cancer tumors.

These foods *should* be a regular part of a healthy, balanced diet anyway.

I suggest my patients eat them because the vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants they supply fuel your cells and help repair DNA, an important part of cancer prevention.

So here are **two steps** I recommend for everyone...

1. Cut out the garbage. And cut out processed grains, foods from a box and anything with refined sugars;
2. Eat natural, organic foods. These foods naturally tend toward an alkaline pH in line with your body and they're packed with nutrients your cells need to stay healthy.

So, the bottom line is this: If you or a loved one has cancer, for a dime a day, taking baking soda in moderation won't hurt and will certainly help neutralize your body's cancerous environment.

To Your Good Health,



Al Sears, MD, CNS

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