

# How to Win the War on Cancer

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“Over the last several decades,...medicine has waged a major war against cancer, concentrating on earlier diagnosis and improved therapy. The war is not being won. Nevertheless, medicine shows few signs of admitting that its strategy may be flawed. In this it resembles a World War I general who stated: ‘Casualties: huge. Ground gained: negligible. Conclusion: press on.’”

If you look at the contribution of cancer-killing chemo to five-year survival in cancer patients, it's on the order of only about 2%. Now, there's some pediatric cancers we've gotten good at treating, and testicular cancer and Hodgkin's disease are exceptions, but if you look at our most common cancers—colon, lung, breast, and prostate—the success rate is only about 1%. Meaning like, out of nearly 14,000 colon cancer patients, only 146 lived out five years thanks to chemotherapy. So, the chance of survival benefit is like one in a hundred, but doctors don't tell patients that. “[N]ew chemotherapy drug[s are] promoted as...major breakthrough[s], only to be later [quietly] rejected.” “The minimal impact on survival in the more common cancers conflicts with the perceptions of many patients who feel they are receiving a treatment that will significantly enhance their chances of cure.”

“In view of the minimal impact of cytotoxic chemotherapy on 5-year survival, and the lack of any major progress over the last 20 years, it follows that [its] main role...is really in palliation.” It can shrink tumors down, relieving pain and pressure—but that doesn't tend to translate into living any longer. “The failure of therapy, coupled with the realization that the overwhelming majority of cancer is related to environmental, particularly lifestyle, factors, dictates that prevention should be our foremost aim.”

“Cancer is [largely] a preventable disease,” *but* it does “require...major lifestyle changes.” Of the millions diagnosed with cancer every year, as many as 90 to 95% of cancers are caused by “lifestyle factors,” and only 5% to 10% caused by bad genes. We know this because of “enormous differences in the incidence of [different] forms of cancer” around the world, which then change when people move from one place to another. So, for example, breast cancer rates differ by an order of magnitude, with the lowest rates in parts of Africa and Asia, until they

move and start eating and living like Americans, Argentinians, Europeans, or Australians.

So: “There is a need for a major reappraisal of how the problem of cancer is approached.” The key to winning the war on cancer is “prevention,” which not only works better, but “has the great advantage that it entails nothing worse than nicotine [or jelly bean] withdrawal symptoms. On the other hand, cancer treatment, even when successful, often exposes the patient to much suffering, both physical and psychological. Indeed, some cancer treatments are considered worse than the disease.”

Most importantly, though, a healthy lifestyle can nip it in the bud, whereas early diagnosis and treatment by definition doesn’t change the cancer rate; doesn’t change the number of people getting cancer in the first place. In terms of cancer prevention and treatment with *nutrition*, the consumption of animal-based food components has been historically “associated with increased cancer risk while [certain plant-based food components have been] associated with decreasing risk.”

So, it’s not enough to just avoid the bad stuff. Eating is pretty much “a zero-sum game.” Everything we put in our mouth is a lost opportunity to put something even healthier in our mouths. So, it’s not just about avoiding foods with cancer-promoting properties; we need to eat foods with active cancer-suppressing mechanisms. By “wholistic” nutrition, we’re talking about *whole* foods. Yes, these are some of the purported active ingredients of healthy things like turmeric, or green tea, or broccoli, but this is how we should get them—not from pills.

Yes, ultimately “cancer development” [may] “primarily [be] a nutrition-responsive disease,” but we’re not talking about nutritional supplements, but rather “whole, intact food.”

<https://nutritionfacts.org/video/how-to-win-the-war-on-cancer/>