



**Sunflower
Wellness**

Living through cancer with exercise

Sunflower Wellness provides
therapeutic movement and exercise
for people living with cancer.

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May 2011

The Straight Skinny on Diet and Cancer

With this newsletter, Sunflower Wellness begins a series on Nutrition and Cancer, graciously authored by Cecelia Otteweller, a volunteer and survivor in Houston. Installments of Cecelia's interview with cancer nutritionist Natalie Ledesma can be found on our website at <http://www.sunflowerwellness.org/Nutrition>.

Cecelia writes: Natalie Ledesma (MS, RD, CSO, Nutrition Specialist with Smith Integrative Oncology and Oncology Dietician with UCSF Helen Diller Family Comprehensive Cancer Center) was a godsend while I was undergoing my second wave of breast cancer treatments in 2007. I began working with her at my mother's insistence... You'd think someone going through six months of chemo would fully embrace the idea of working with a nutritionist to help deal with the effects of all those chemicals coursing through my body, but my reaction was actually the opposite. I dragged my feet in calling her.

I was dealing with my second "cancer adventure" in two years. Between 2006 and 2009, I went through a lumpectomy, sentinel node biopsy, four rounds of "Red Devil" chemo, six weeks of radiation (my "boob-b-ques"), a follow-up mammogram that revealed another tumor in the original breast, a mastectomy and hysterectomy (my ovaries were doing me no favors!) six months of Abraxane and Xeloda, followed by a mastectomy of the left breast and a bilateral DIEP flap in 2009.

(Article continues: see "Nutrition" on Page 2)

Trainer spotlight: Jane Clark

By Carrie Bonnet
Sunflower Wellness Board Secretary



Sunflower Wellness fitness instructor Jane Clark

Jane Clark is my trainer; she is my exercise counselor, above all she is the expert I turn to when it comes to understanding me, my health, my body and my goals. She pushes me when I need to be pushed and slows me down when I get ahead of myself. More than anything – in my unpredictable journey through two cancer diagnoses, various treatments and path to stay healthy--Jane is my answer, my known, my path to me gaining the tools needed to heal myself. Jane understands the effects of the various cancers, treatments, effects and how to regain strength, endurance, stamina and focus on prevention.

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- *New research: 33% reduction in death among women with breast cancer who exercise*
- *First person: Kendelyn Beck*
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Nutrition (cont. from page 1)

When Mom suggested calling Natalie, I was only half way through this list. I was feeling a smidge sorry for myself and was quite tired of folks' "helpful" suggestions.

By the time I started my second set of chemo treatments, I was more than a little tired of dealing with insinuations that somehow I'd caused my cancer. As some of you have probably experienced, people's reactions to our having cancer can sometimes be a little...odd. I was young, appeared healthy (though overweight), I was active. Reactions ran the gamut after my diagnosis and at times I had to contend with a torrent of un-sought-after advice and theories, especially about diet:

- "You're not going to do chemo, are you? You just need to juice!"
- "Well, you're obviously overweight..."
- "I knew this guy who went to Mexico and did an intense vitamin therapy and he's in complete remission. You should do that..."
- "A macrobiotic diet is the ONLY way to go!"
- "You didn't take your vitamins, did you???"
- "Yeah. Don't eat sugar. It makes cancer grow."
- "It was the milk. You had to have drank too much milk. And eaten too much beef. Yep, the cows are doing you in."
- "EVERYTHING you eat has to be organic!"
- "Are you juicing???" (repeated because this was a comment I dealt with a lot...)
- "I've got a book for you! 'Alkalize or DIE!' (this last one delivered in my favorite coffee house, in front of a busy crowd, 3 days after I had to shave off all my hair... peachy.)

It's impossible to avoid the discussion about the link between diet and disease. The subject appears everywhere, from Jamie Oliver trying to clean up the diet of Los Angeles school kids to Dr. Oz or some other health advocate appearing on TV or on the front of nearly every magazine in the grocery checkout line. (And, as a side note, have you noticed that the covers of those magazines usually have one "health" article listed, but the image *right next to it* is of some gooey, chocolately/creamy treat with some kind of rainbow sprinkles on it?? Talk about mixed messages!)

I'd like to be around for at least a few more decades with no more medical "drama". So, I reconnected with the great Ms. Ledesma and she very generously took the time to answer some basic questions I had about the connections between diet and breast cancer. She also gave me the bottom line on what the best changes I could make to improve my diet overall.

Natalie and I had a GREAT conversation, but it's much longer than we can reprint in our newsletter, so we've put the full text on the website! Please go to <http://www.Sunflowerwellness.org/Nutrition> to see all of Natalie's comments about dairy, meat, seafood, sugar, alkalinity, gluten, cleansing and many other interesting subjects. We've also included some links to great recipes and fabulous cookbooks for you to look at!

What we've printed here is just a synopsis of what Natalie had to say on a variety of subjects. Please trust me – go to the site and read her full comments! They are well worth your time!

What's a board certified specialist in oncology nutrition (CSO)? "I had to be a registered dietitian (RD) for at least 2 years, have over 2,000 hours of oncology experience, and pass an exam (every 5yrs)."

Bottom line – can diet affect survival? "Cancer is multifactorial...Over 70% of the contributing factors to cancer mortality stem from diet and lifestyle, including smoking."

Dairy: "While there is not consistent positive association between dairy and breast cancer, dairy is not a hot item on my list."

Meat: "...seek to get 80% of your calories from plant foods. Use meat as a condiment, not your meal."

Seafood and Omega 3s: "While most seafood provides you some omega-3 fatty acids, the cold-water fish (i.e., salmon, sardines, trout, sablefish) is where they really are – and I believe those are important."

(Article continues on next page)

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Sugar: “Higher serum insulin levels (>13 ng/ml) have been associated with poorer survival among breast cancer survivors.”

Alcohol: “...alcohol is associated with the risk of breast cancer and more recently with the recurrence of breast cancer. A recent study found that women who had 3 drinks a week had a 37% increased risk of recurrence.”

Remission and Diet: I’ve seen amazing results when one makes significant diet modifications – improved labs, increased strength & vitality, better sleep, eliminating prior symptoms, mitigating treatment side effects, 50lb weight loss, and more...

Please visit our website for more extensive nutrition information from Natalie.

Research update

Previous research has shown that exercise is associated with lower risk of cancer recurrence and longer survival. To look into this further, a recent study by Dr. Melinda Irwin (Yale University) and colleagues (including Anne McTiernan, MD, both of whom serve on the Sunflower Wellness Medical Advisory Board) assessed the association between change in physical activity before and after diagnosis. They examined data from 4,643 postmenopausal women who had been diagnosed with breast cancer during the Women’s Health Initiative, a large U.S. observational study funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

The study confirmed that exercise after diagnosis is associated with lower breast cancer mortality and lower all-cause mortality. In addition, they found that women who increased or maintained a high level of physical activity (equivalent to 3 hours or more of fast walking per week) had a 33% lower risk of death (by any cause), even in those who were inactive prior to diagnosis. The researchers concluded that women with breast cancer, regardless of previous physical activity status, should be encouraged to participate in moderate to vigorous exercise to improve survival.

Reference: Irwin ML, McTiernan A, Mason JE, et al. Physical Activity and Survival in Postmenopausal Women with Breast Cancer: Results from the Women’s Health Initiative. Cancer Prev Res. 2011 Apr;4(4):522-9.

Jane Clark (cont. from page 1)

I met Jane six years ago when I was 25. I was diagnosed with melanoma and six months later breast cancer (with no family history). My oncologist encouraged me to exercise. During my chemo I joined a weekly exercise class co-led by Jane and Regan Fedric and quickly realized that exercise truly was my magic pill. These classes consisted of participants with a wide range in age (25-75), cancer type, stage, and treatment timing. Some people were years out and others were just beginning or currently in treatment. Some days I would feel so ill I wouldn’t even want to move. Yet, I would go to Jane’s class and magically I was better for the rest of the day! I was exponentially better every day until my next treatment. After my treatment finished I began to realize what a profound impact exercise had on my healing both mentally and physically. I continue to work with Jane one on one.

Jane sits on panels with my various oncologists (including the head of the breast center at UCSF) and top cancer researchers; she helped create the immediately successful Exercise Counseling program at UCSF. She leads workshops and seminars for trainers where I am asked to sit on panels. When Jane assisted in the launch of Sunflower Wellness, I immediately got involved and am now a board member. I want to see Jane’s work grow and help as many people as possible.

Jane Clark was honored on March 17, 2011 by the International Health & Racquet Sport Association (IHRSA), the fitness industry’s only global trade association. IHRSA represents over 9,000 for profit health and fitness facilities and over 650 supplier companies in 75 countries. Jane was the second-ever recipient of the Julie Main Emerging Woman Leader Scholarship. Julie Main was an IHRSA board member, co-owner of West Coast Athletic Clubs and founder of the Cancer Wellfit Program. She passed away in May 2009 after a long battle with breast cancer. The Julie Main Emerging Woman Leader Scholarship is given each year to a female candidate who exemplifies what Julie stood for: courage, perseverance, excellence, and professionalism. Sunflower Wellness proudly salutes Jane for receiving this high honor, and for her continued hard work and dedication to Sunflower Wellness and our clients. Way to go, Jane!

First Person: Kendelyn Beck

Diagnosed with stage 4 breast cancer in 2003 with metastases in her bones and brain, Kendelyn Beck was unsure if she "wanted to go on." Fortunately, she came to realize that "yes I do want to stay here!" While on treatment, Kendelyn began exercising with Regan Fedric in 2004.

Kendelyn's experience supports the efficacy of exercise in living with cancer. As she puts it, "Although my situation provides anecdotal proof, I do have tests which would indicate that the exercise has certainly affected my heart function so that I am now in the "normal" range. To me it is a no brainer that exercise is extremely important and a valuable asset to creating and maintaining balance and health."

Kendelyn offers the following advice to others facing a cancer diagnosis: "handle the emotions associated with the diagnosis as quickly as you can. Get help, get support, get involved with someone who has been there and done that so that you can see there is light at the end of the tunnel and it may not be the train. Then, once you handle the details of the diagnosis, try to get into whatever exercise attracts you. Don't necessarily do what I do. Get back to whatever you love to do or start something that you have never done.

What I love best about Sunflower Wellness is that I am not doing this alone. I am with people who are doing things for themselves, not having pity parties. I exercise a lot better when I am not isolated."

Today Kendelyn remains an active Sunflower Wellness participant as she weekly takes several classes with Jane Clark, Regan Fedric, and an aqua class with Tricia Probert. Additionally, Kendelyn plays piano in a swing band, uses her mini trampoline at home and according to her pedometer walks at least 10,000 steps a day!

By the numbers

Our UCSF Cancer Center Exercise Counseling service celebrated its first anniversary on April 15. By then we had held 212 patient sessions. Nearly 80% of patients reported in follow-up calls that they had begun to exercise. Stress and fatigue levels for exercisers dropped an average of 17% each.

New strength

Sunflower Wellness is extremely pleased to announce three new outstanding Directors on our Board:



Anne Stackhouse, Director

Anne is acclaimed as a skilled movement therapist, highly successful in the treatment of chronic conditions. She has formulated

countless exercise and wellness programs for groups and individuals of all ages and abilities. She has designed and directed numerous health and fitness retreats. She also conducts workshops and appears as an event speaker. Anne is the originator of the Stackhouse Technique which is a lifelong fitness program emphasizing posture alignment.



Trisha Hue, PhD, MPH, Director

Dr. Hue received her MPH in public health nutrition and PhD in epidemiology from the University of California, Berkeley, School of Public

Health. Dr. Hue is currently pursuing research on the mechanisms for increased risk of breast and colon cancer with excess body fat. Her interests also include the effects of micronutrients, angiogenic factors, and markers of inflammation. She has extensive experience in the design and conduct of numerous industry and NIH-funded clinical trials and longitudinal studies. Additional research interests include nutritional epidemiology, cancer prevention, and osteoporosis.

Kris Morrison, Treasurer

Kris is a Senior Investment Associate with RBC Wealth Management in San Francisco, focusing exclusively on socially responsible investing. His team consults on over \$1 billion in assets. He holds a Bachelors degree from the College of Architecture and Environmental Design at Arizona State University.

In 2008, Kris was diagnosed with Hodgkins Lymphoma. Exercise was an important part of living well though the cancer treatment and during the recovery process. Recently, Kris participated in the San Jose Livestrong Challenge, a 100 mile bike ride benefiting cancer research and patient advocacy. He also volunteers as a "cancer buddy" for newly diagnosed cancer patients. He's passionate about eradicating cancer and making sure those living with cancer find the best quality of life available.