



Diane: Welcome to Conversations about Bladder Cancer. I'm Diane Zipursky Quale, the co-founder of BCAN, and I'm here today at the Lynne Peterson Holmes Teaching Kitchen, at the Smith Center for Healing and the Arts in Washington D.C. We're going to talk today about the impact of diet on bladder cancer, specifically on prevention, recurrence and progression. We're also going to taste some good and healthy foods. Joining me here today is Dr. Jill Hamilton-Reeves. She's a specialist in translational and clinical nutrition science, focusing on nutrition and cancer prevention and management with an emphasis on bladder cancer. Jill joins us today from the University of Kansas Medical Center. Thanks for being here, Jill. We also have Laura Pole, who's an oncology clinical nurse specialist, a health supportive chef, and she's the director of nourishment programs here at the Smith Center for Healing and the Arts. Thanks for being here, Laura. We are going to get started right into it. Let's start with the basics. What do we know about food, diet and bladder cancer?

Jill: Alright, well, let's get to it. What we do know is that 50% of cancers could be prevented through lifestyle choices, which would include diet, but also includes physical activity, vaccinations, using sunscreen. But, if we hone in on diet, 30% of cancers could be prevented through changing the diet. One thing that I think is really important to keep in mind in our conversations today, is that diet isn't an either/or, or good or bad. There's really a spectrum of healthy diet and so Laura will be helping us talk about foods, kind of moving from the less healthy side over to the more nourishing foods and more nutrient dense types of foods. It's the pattern of all those fruits and vegetables that really are going to offer the punch to either prevent cancer or help keep cancer from coming back.

Diane: Let's talk in specifics. Are there specific foods or vitamins that we should make sure we include on our plate to either help prevent bladder cancer or help us during our bladder cancer journey?

Jill: That's a great question. To date, there's no one food that will prevent cancer or keep cancer from coming back, right?

Diane: Darn. I wish it were that easy, right?

Jill: We eat lots of different foods and many foods in combination, and the patterns of those foods, can really offer the kind of health benefit that we're looking for. Now, that being said, there are a couple of trials that are underway right now that are really looking at the promise of diet and bladder cancer. One of them is really looking at the power of broccoli or isothiocyanates that are in broccoli and looking to see if consuming more of those foods in non-muscle invasive bladder cancer prevents it from recurring. Another space where we're doing some work is looking at blood sugar controls, so, people with pre-diabetes or diabetes, really helping them keep their blood sugar in normal, healthy range, so that the sugar isn't interacting with the bladder wall and feeding the cancer to recurrence.

Diane: Let's talk, Laura. I happen to like broccoli, but I know a lot of people aren't into eating of a lot of greens. Can you give us some suggestions or advice of how to incorporate broccoli or other greens into our diets, in a way that we'll enjoy eating them?

Laura: Sure. Let's talk about, there's a lot of vegetables in that family we call the cruciferous vegetables. If you look in the leaves, this is collard green, but broccoli leaves look very much like this, they have a crucifix or cross pattern in the leaves, so that's how that family got its name. I like to find different ways to have my crucifers ... sounds interesting, doesn't it?

Diane: It does.

Laura: I often start my day with crucifer. I do something I call Sunshine in the Meadow, and I might take kale, or I might take some broccoli or some other kind of green, and I'll sauté it in a little olive oil and add a little garlic to it, then I'll make a little hole in the middle of them-remember the Toad-in-the-hole with the bread, little hole?- and I pour some oil in there and put an egg in the middle, and cover it, and steam it. I call it my Sunshine in the Meadow.

Diane: That sounds quite tasty, though I will admit it might take me some time to replace my bread with greens. But, it sounds quite good.

Jill: There's some extra tricks that I hear Laura putting in there. The egg is going to, of course, be a good source of protein, but also healthy fats and vitamin D. Then you threw in some garlic, and that garlic has myrosinase which is going to help us absorb the isothiocyanates.

Diane: Okay, so myrosinase, is there an easier word than that?

Jill: Let's just say it's an enzyme that helps break things down so that we can get it into our gut and use it easier. Does that work?

Diane: So, absorption in your gut is better.

Jill: Yes.

Jill: So, adding pungent things like garlic or radish, when you're eating your cruciferous vegetables, can help you absorb the good stuff even better.

Diane: Okay. Laura, Jill also talked about studies being done on blood sugar and regulating blood sugar, in particular, with bladder cancer patients. Are there suggestions you have in our diet, again, to help achieve that?

Laura: Absolutely. One of the things that help is favoring whole grains over refined grains. For instance, white rice would be a refined grain. Brown rice is the whole grain. Added to my breakfast, I would like to have a whole grain cereal and of course, that could be oatmeal. But, I also like to use other grains like quinoa (keenwah) because it cooks very fast, it's a complete protein, meaning it has all the essential amino acids. It's the only grain that is a complete protein. without having to mix it with something else, and I just cook it up like I would oatmeal, and I add raisins and nuts, and maybe some apples, chia seeds, cinnamon, put a little almond milk with it, and it's really delicious. The other thing is a trick, when you're eating carbohydrates, so whole grains are carbohydrates also, but they're not refined. If you add fat to that, and fiber, when you're eating a carbohydrate, that slows down the movement of that carbohydrate through your system, so you're not pulling that glucose out as quickly, so you don't get quite the rush. So the fat would be from the nuts, right? You could put some butter or coconut oil in it. When you add fiber, if I just ate the carbohydrate by itself, that would make my blood sugar come up faster, is that right?

Jill: Yep, right on.

Diane: Let me ask you a quick question about quinoa. Is this something I could make a big pot of it, and put it in the fridge so that I don't have to cook up the quinoa every morning?

Laura: Absolutely. We call it "deja-chew". You take something, if it's a big pot of quinoa, or grain and some beans, then you can repurpose it each day, so maybe that night you had your quinoa with some beans over it, or you had a little pilaf, like sautéing it with onions and garlic and some other vegetables. Then you have some that will go in your cereal. If you had black beans and quinoa, you can take some black beans and quinoa the next day and mash them together, add a little garlic powder, a little onion powder, sauté in a pan and you've got a patty, a veggie burger.

Diane: The all-purpose food!

Diane: Jill, Laura also mentioned protein, and quinoa being a good source of protein. We hear a lot about protein and how it's important to have in your diet. There are good proteins, maybe better proteins. Can you talk about the impact of protein for the bladder cancer

patient and what, again, what we should either avoid or if there are things we want to make sure we add to our diet?

Jill: Thank you for asking. Again, thinking about the spectrum of health for foods, not either/or, or good or bad, the American Institute for Cancer Research (AICR) recommends eating less red meat and processed meats, because they are associated with other cancer types, not necessarily bladder cancer, but I think that's helpful to keep in mind. So, for thinking about going more towards the healthful side of the spectrum, one of the healthiest sources of protein is seafood and fish, and salmon in particular is very high in Omega 3 fatty acids, fish oils that help calm inflammation, which is important for keeping cancer at bay from recurring, and also for overall health.

Diane: I eat a lot of grilled salmon, but if you wanted to have more variety, do you have a suggestion for us?

Laura: Jill and I have this favorite recipe. We were in a class together. It's salmon patties with sweet potatoes. I came up with this idea because, typically, people mix it with potatoes or a lot of bread crumbs. We cooked some sweet potatoes and put turmeric in it, and onions, and I curry it up. You could use salmon you buy at the fish counter, but I use canned salmon. That adds the punch of having the bones and the skin in the salmon. When you mash it up enough, you don't even know the bones are in there. It's been cooked at such a high heat that the bones will just dissolve, so you get the calcium from that, and then the fats that you talked about, plus it's convenient. You don't have to cook the salmon ahead of time. I make this curry tartar sauce with it, instead of using pickle relish, there's little pieces of apple in there, and there's curry powder, and mayo, and mustard, and lemon juice, and it's really, really delicious.

Jill: I love this recipe. In fact, I make it for myself for my birthday every year because I like it so much. You mentioned the sweet potatoes, and sweet potatoes are lower glycemic, as far as a carb source goes, and then there's also some tartness in here to help slow down the absorption of sugars. Turmeric is anti-inflammatory, so that's why you see turmeric almost everywhere as a functional food, because of that. This recipe is awesome.

Diane: Laura, what does turmeric taste like?

Laura: By itself, I wouldn't just sit there and eat it. It's dry and bitter. That's how I guess I would describe the taste a bit. But, when you mix it with other foods, that's the whole secret, the right amount of each of the things that build flavor. It's not the prominent taste in here. By itself, it's not really meant to be eaten by itself. Although, actually, if you make an olive oil and whisk it with some turmeric and a little salt, it's actually a nice salad dressing. When it's paired with other things, it's really good.

Diane: Jill, I know one question that comes up a lot in the bladder cancer community, is a question about hydration, and whether or not the amount of water I drink in a day,

either impacted my susceptibility to bladder cancer or has a role to play in my disease. What can you say about hydration and bladder cancer?

Jill: The idea of that is that the more you drink, the more diluted carcinogens or toxins could be in the bladder when it's sitting there. The data are really mixed though on cause and effect. But, I can say that the more hydrated that you are, usually the better you feel. A lot of people feel very fatigued when they're dehydrated, so getting enough water, which a general rule of thumb is take your body weight in pounds, half that, and then that amount in ounces is a good amount to drink.

Diane: That sounds, to me, if I do that calculation in my head, like a lot to drink during the day. Laura, do you have some suggestions for us of what I could drink besides drinking that much water during the day?

Laura: So you could have tea, we're having some green tea here. Yes. You can jazz up your water with a little bit of citrus in it, or something like that. I do want to mention, if you're eating more fruits and vegetables, you will get more water in, so it doesn't all have to come from what you drink. But, I think you'll be very happy that you can drink your treat here, have your treat, and drink it. This is a banana chocolate smoothie. It doesn't have any refined sugar added to it, isn't that good?

Diane: This is really good. For someone like myself, who has an incredible sweet tooth, it's good to know I can have my sweets and still stay within a relatively healthy range. This is a lot better for me than my chocolate chip cookie, right?

Laura: Well, depends on who made your chocolate chip cookie. Let me come cook for you.

Diane: Yes, I would love for you to. I know that for a lot of people, they don't have the time to shop, to cook, to have the healthy meal that we all strive for. Do you have some suggestions or tips for people who won't have the time to stock their kitchen or do the cooking?

Laura: Yeah. There are a lot of grocery stores now that have these prepared foods sections, and you can get some pretty good choices. Yesterday, when I was shopping for groceries to cook food, I'm not going to want to cook every meal this week. I have other things to do. I got a nine dollar plate of food. It had this piece of chicken, and it had two sides. You can choose to have healthy, delicious food on that plate. This makes up what's called the new American plate. The American Institute for Cancer Research designed this way to think about how much should go on the plate of what. Two thirds of the plate comes from plants. One third can come from animals. Here is a piece of chicken, but it could be the fish, or that other third could be a bean and a grain with your high protein source, so, it could be vegetarian. That two thirds of plants is not supposed to be all potatoes and corn.

Diane: You've certainly given us some really good ideas today to make our plates healthier and tastier, so I thank you both so much for joining me today. This has been a great conversation, and I know so helpful to the members of our community. We will put on our website a list of resources where you can go to find out more information about diet and nutrition, and maybe find nutritional specialists even in your own community. Laura's generously provided us with the recipes for this wonderful food we've had today. Those will also be available on our website. I want to thank you all for joining us today for this conversation about bladder cancer.

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