



Vitamin C as a Cancer Fighter

By Anita Brikman

November 8, 2006 (WPVI) -- Millions of us start the day with orange juice, because it tastes good and because we think vitamin C is important for overall health.

A growing number of doctors think this essential vitamin could do a lot more. They are putting it directly into bloodstreams of patients to fight one of the deadliest diseases around.

When Donna Gudauskas of Cherry Hill learned she had early-stage colon cancer last December, she underwent surgery to take out the tumor. But the advertising representative did not want to have chemotherapy and radiation afterward.

"The chances I would need a colostomy bag when they were done was pretty high, just from the damage, the tissue damage from the radiation," said Gudauskas.

Instead, she switched to an organic diet, took nutritional supplements and began intravenous infusions of vitamin C.

Every week, Donna receives 45 grams - more than 600 oranges' worth of vitamin C directly into her veins.

Nobel Prize winner Dr. Linus Pauling began the vitamin C crusade 30 years ago, reporting that cancer patients who got high doses lived longer.

However, 2 government studies with oral Vitamin C supplements failed to produce the same success.

Taken by mouth, the body automatically gets rid of excess Vitamin C through the urine. To get high concentrations, it has to go directly into the blood. Interest in intravenous Vitamin C has been rising, however, with publication this year of research by Mark Levine at the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Disease.

Levine's work, done in collaboration with National Cancer Institute pathologists, suggests Vitamin C can work like chemotherapy, but with some advantages - lower toxicity to healthy cells, fewer and less severe side effects, and lower costs.

His lab showed that in high concentrations in the blood, Vitamin C is toxic to many types of cancer cells in lab dishes.

Levine also detailed 3 case studies from the Center for the Improvement of Human Functioning in Wichita, Kansas. It was created by physician Hugh Riordan, a friend of Linus Pauling.

The cases report the improvements 3 patients saw receiving Vitamin C infusions, rather than traditional chemotherapy and radiation.

Dr. Allan Magaziner, who practices complementary medicine, says he has had success over the past 2 decades with I-V vitamin C.

"By using it intravenously, we attain levels that are 50 to 100 times higher than what's possible to receive by mouth alone."

"Breast cancer, prostate cancer, colon cancer, lung cancer, and lymphoma," said Magaziner, referring to the types of cancer which respond best to the Vitamin C treatment.

He says that in high concentrations in the blood, Vitamin C acts like a toxic drug, causing disease-fighting cells in the body to generate more hydrogen peroxide.

"It's an agent that can attack the tumor cells, yet keep the healthy cells healthy and intact," said Magaziner.

He says it works hand-in-hand with standard cancer treatment.

"They don't seem to get as many side effects from chemotherapy or conventional radiation. Patients stay in remission longer, the tumor can shrink," explained Magaziner.

"We're finding out that with some cancers, we have to use much higher dosages than I was using before. Now we're finding out we want to obtain certain blood levels of Vitamin C, and at which doses the hydrogen peroxide was greatest."

For Donna, a recent series of tests brought encouraging results. Right now, she is cancer-free.

The Vitamin C infusions, which cost about \$100 each, are not covered by insurance and are not FDA approved.

Most mainstream cancer experts, including Dr. Anil Rustgi of the University of Pennsylvania, are skeptical.

He says that while good nutrition can be a cancer preventive, as a treatment Vitamin C alone is unproven.

"It has to be studied in a systematic fashion," said Rustgi.

Glenda Williams is already a believer. She credits Vitamin C, along with several other nutritional supplements, with helping her survive breast cancer.

"I feel better than I did prior to being diagnosed with cancer," said Williams.

"I wanted to build my immune system up to the full potential it could be, and to give me the best quality of health that I could have."

Levine and his collaborators are continuing their studies at the National Institutes of Health. The NIH will soon publish several new papers on IV vitamin C as chemotherapy.

Local researchers expect to soon open tests to scientifically see if vitamin C does extend lives.

At Jefferson University's center for integrative medicine, the infusions are already being used for nutrition boosters.

RESOURCES:

ON THE NET: [Dr. Allan Magaziner, Magaziner Center for Wellness](#)

ON THE NET: [Jefferson University Center for Integrative Medicine](#)

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