

complete works on cancer is *Choices in Healing* (MIT Press, 1996) by Michael Lerner, Ph.D. The book is the culmination of 10 years of research on integrating conventional and alternative cancer therapies. This book is well worth a thorough read before any decisions are made about any therapy. The complete text of the book is also available on-line at Commonweal's Web site: www.commonweal.org.

3 BUILD A SUPPORT NETWORK. A landmark 10-year breast-cancer study by David Spiegel, M.D., found that women who participated in weekly group therapy sessions had twice the survival time than a group of women who did not. The experience of cancer patients sharing their stories with each other engenders hope and nourishes a sense of connection to others that may actually facilitate healing. Your spouse, family and loved ones cannot do it all. But, ask for help researching therapies, getting to medical appointments, cooking and exercising. As Weil says, "Learn to be a gracious recipient of their help." A good place to begin researching a support group is Oncolink: <http://oncolink.upenn.edu>.

4 DON'T BE AFRAID TO EXPRESS EMOTION. Many cancer specialists suggest that expressing your emotions—especially anger—instead of suppressing them, can mitigate the progress of cancer. Discovering a creative outlet for unwanted emotions, such as a journal, exercise or art, has been clinically

NUTRITIONAL SUPPORT

If you are actively managing cancer, supplementation becomes a very individualized issue based on the type of cancer you have and the state of your immune system. The following are some of the most promising supplements that can help strengthen your immune system and be part of a cancer-prevention or treatment plan. Work closely with your practitioner to create the optimal plan.

Astragalus: This herb has been clinically shown to improve white-cell counts. Buy in tincture or capsule form or as part of an immune-boosting formula. Take as directed.

CoQ10: If you feel very weak, take up to 200 mg of this vitaminlike nutrient, which increases oxygenation of the heart and liver cells.

IP6: IP6 (inositol hexaphosphate) or phytic acid occurs naturally in the bran, or hull, of all grains and beans. IP6 has been shown to prevent tumor growth and even shrink existing tumors. While most of the

studies have been done with laboratory animals, human studies have shown that IP6 inhibits the growth of prostate cells and adenocarcinoma. Work with your health-care practitioner while using IP6. While some experts recommend up to 8 gm daily, seek the advice of your physician to determine a dosage suited to your needs.

Maitake mushroom: New research with maitake suggests that it is a potent cancer fighter. The general dosage to support the immune system is 6 mg of the D-fraction form two or three times daily (liquid or capsules). Therapeutic dosages, however, have been as high as 100 mg daily.

Reishi mushroom: This tonic mushroom has been clinically proven to boost immune function. Available in tincture and tablet. Take as directed.

Selenium: 200 mcg per day.

Vitamin C: This antioxidant helps to rebuild injured tissues and inhibit tumor growth. Take up to 5,000 mg a day.

"I don't believe in the cancer therapies that are sold to you and determine for yourself what is best. At the end of the day, your treatment will be returned to you in one form or another."

proven to be great for your health. Facing your fears is also primary in overcoming obstacles to healing. This may require going deep within and sitting humbly with yourself. A great book to read on this subject is *Cancer as a Turning Point* by psychotherapist Lawrence LeShan, Ph.D. (Plume, 1994).

5 EVALUATE YOUR DIET. Diet cannot be overemphasized as a

factor in cancer management and prevention. What you eat creates a body ecology that can make you more or less at risk for cancer. The increased intake of processed foods, vegetable oils, margarine, sugar and an excessive amount of rich food has been correlated to an increase in cancer in the past 60 years. Dietary therapy for cancer management is too broad a subject to tackle alone; it should be supervised by an open-minded health-care professional. Your nutritional regime will depend on the type and stage of your cancer, and whether you are a deficient, weak person or a hearty, robust individual.

6 EXERCISE. Regular aerobic exercise is really oxygen therapy. A study from Germany published last year in the journal *Cancer* found that patients who engaged in regular aerobic exercise after finishing their course of high-dose chemotherapy recovered their energy faster than those who rested instead. As Weil also suggests, "If your aerobic capacity is limited by your illness, you can start with some type of meditative exercise—such as yoga, tai chi or qi gong—and add more aerobic activity as you get stronger."

7 PREPARE FOR A HEALING CHANGE. You may get worse before you get better. Healing changes happen with any therapy you decide to work with, whether it is radical dietary change or radiation. There will be changes in your body and mind that may not always be comfortable. Being conscious of these changes is half the battle. Cancer can offer a deep appreciation for life itself. ■

SELECTED REFERENCES Benson, H. *Timeless Healing: The Power of Biology and Belief* (Scribner, 1996) ■ Beinfeld, H and Beinfeld, M. "Revisiting accepted wisdom in the management of breast cancer" *Alternative Therapies in Health and Medicine* (1997); 3: 35-53 ■ Hellman S. and Harris J. "The appropriate breast cancer paradigm" *Cancer Research* (1987) 47:341 ■ Lerner, M. *Choices in Healing: Integrating the Best of Conventional and Complementary Approaches to Cancer* (MIT Press, 1996) ■ Weil, A. "Complementary care for cancer" *Self Healing* (January 1998)

Lee Tessina (58) Hodgkin's disease
LOS ANGELES

CROSSROADS Diagnosed in 1981 with jelly-bean-sized nodes on his neck. Doctors recommended six weeks of chemotherapy or 14 weeks of full-body radiation. Tessina turned down both, and instead attended a Cancer Control Society convention to investigate options.

TREATMENT OF CHOICE Primarily nutritional; Tessina spent four days at a cancer clinic in Mexico and began treatment with megadoses of vitamins and Laetrile. Follow-up at home included a continuation of the clinic regimen, a special diet and practicing visualization techniques.

RESULTS Although the nodes remain, 15 years later, there is no sign of cancer. Tessina reports never having experienced pain or discomfort.