

One of the well-known side effects of radiation therapy is appetite loss. But I wondered if N-TENSE might play a role here as well. I called on HSI Panelist Allan Spreen, M.D., for his thoughts, and he began by saying that graviola – an "excellent herb for trying a non-toxic approach against cancer" – probably has nothing to do with the loss of appetite.

As for a plan of action for Mary and her father, Dr. Spreen offered these suggestions:

"The key thing right now is to make certain that ALL calories ingested are highly nutrient dense, especially since there isn't much appetite. Also, digestion will be adversely affected, so the foods eaten should be as easily digested as possible. The solution to both is the use of any of the 'green foods,' such as chlorella (inexpensive and excellent), spirulina, barley green, or mixtures of them. There are several brands out there, and they can be mixed with most anything. The foods are almost pre-digested and highly nutrient dense.

"I'd also throw some *L. acidophilus* culture in there, in powder form, maybe 1/4-1/2 tsp before eating, to make certain that the low appetite is not due to highly altered gut flora (it can do that sometimes, and radiation will kill those 'good guy' bacteria also).

"There are also several herbs that can be tried as appetite stimulants, but they tend (in my limited experience) to be less effective for radiation-induced anorexia than in other situations. Nettle, chamomile, Gotu kola are three, but there are many others that can be tried."

And one other tip for Mary: Rather than coaxing her father into eating three full meals each day, she'll probably have better luck in getting him to eat small amounts several times each day, especially if he's having problems with nausea as well.

Tropic of cancer

The appetite issue aside, Mary is obviously enthusiastic about what she feels are the positive effects of N-TENSE in her father's progress. But because her father is also getting radiation, we'll never know which treatment is doing more to fight his cancer: the radiation or the N-TENSE. What we do know is that research has revealed that graviola – the primary active ingredient of N-TENSE – is a powerful anti-cancer agent.

In the e-Alert "Drug Company and Cancer Institute Hid Possible Cure for 25 Years" (1/31/01), I first told you about graviola, the small evergreen tree that grows in the tropical areas of North and South America.

More than 25 years ago, the National Cancer Institute (NCI) included graviola in a plant-screening program that showed extracts of the leaves and stems of the plant to be effective in attacking and destroying malignant cells. But the results were part of an internal report and were never released to the public.

Years later, a major pharmaceutical company began extensive graviola research. They learned that certain extracts of the tree

actually seek out, attack, and destroy cancer cells, without harming healthy cells, inducing nausea, or causing hair loss. But the natural extracts of graviola (or any other plant) cannot be patented, and the company struggled unsuccessfully to create a synthetic copy that could be as effective as the cancer-fighting components of graviola.

Since then, in vitro research has produced very promising results, with indications that graviola may effectively fight solid breast cancer tumors, as well as prostate, lymphoma, pancreatic, liver and colon cancer.

Graviola is one of the most popular topics on the HSI Forum, and in tomorrow's e-Alert I'll feature a few of the many comments from HSI members regarding their experiences using this remarkable botanical.

...and another thing

Your bones enjoy getting zinned.

In the e-Alert "Waiting to Exhale" (9/13/04) that I sent you earlier this week, I told you about a study that showed how the use of an inhaler – also known as inhaled corticosteroids (ICS) – to treat asthma or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease may contribute to fracture risk due to weakened bones.

That study was conducted at a Veterans Administration hospital, so nearly all the subjects were men. Now I've come across a study that shows how an adequate intake of dietary zinc may help men maintain a healthy bone mass density (BMD).

Researchers at the University of California, San Diego, recruited nearly 400 men between the ages of 45 and 92. The BMD was measured for each subject at the outset of the study, and again four years later. Dietary habits were assessed with food-frequency questionnaires, and zinc levels were measured with blood tests. Analysis of the data showed that both dietary zinc intake and plasma zinc both had a positive association with BMD in men. (Previous studies have already associated low zinc intake with osteoporosis in women.)

In this study, the average dietary zinc intake was just over 11 mg per day, which is the recommended daily allowance (RDA) for males over the age of 19. The best source of zinc is animal protein. Oysters deliver the highest amounts of zinc, followed by red meat and chicken. Other sources include fish, whole grains, nuts and beans.

But men, don't let anyone tell you that the RDA of zinc – or even triple the RDA – will cause prostate cancer.

In the e-Alert "Double Blind" (7/9/03), I told you about a study that warned of elevated prostate cancer risk for men who had a daily zinc intake of 100 mg or more. But the study also found that an intake of zinc less than 100 mg per day had no association with the risk of prostate cancer.

And who takes more than 100 mg of zinc daily? Very few people, I would guess. Certainly no one who is paying attention to the widely-published warnings that zinc may be potentially toxic over

a prolonged period at daily doses of more than 100 mg. At that level, research shows heart problems and anemia can occur.

But unless you go out of your way to add extra zinc to your vitamin regimen, chances are you're not getting anywhere close to 100 mg. Most multivitamin supplements provide well under 50 mg of zinc. And you would need to eat dozens of oysters along with a few servings of beef every day to even approach 100 mg of dietary zinc.

Meanwhile, the zinc that you are getting is very useful. In addition to enhancing the immune system, zinc helps repair damaged tissues, inhibits the abnormal clotting that contributes to cardiovascular disease, and is one of the key nutrients needed for DNA reproduction and repair. Zinc also helps keep your vision healthy.

And for those of you who already include zinc in your daily supplement intake: it's a good idea to add a little copper as well.

In the e-Alert "Aim High" (5/7/03), Dr. Spreen noted that zinc can create a copper deficiency, and vice versa. And Jonathan V. Wright, M.D., agrees, stating that, "Zinc supplements should usually be offset by a small amount of copper, 1-2 mg daily." Fortunately, many multivitamins already take care of the dual zinc/copper need with a low dose of copper.

To Your Good Health,

Jenny Thompson
Health Sciences Institute
