

Living with Prostate Cancer: A Proactive Model

In 1996, Tom Largey, a fit and active 39 year old, did not perceive he had any health problems. He was in the prime of his life—happily married to his love Kelly and father to their first child Tommy born 3 months earlier.

Like many men, Tom had routine physicals infrequently. But as a new parent, he decided to have a check up. Tom's doctor ordered extensive blood work, including a PSA. Tom did not fathom hearing the stunning words, "You have prostate cancer." With a PSA of 40, Tom needed prostate cancer treatments.

"Diagnosis at a young age offers opportunities," says Tom. Although his PSA and Gleason scores were high, and the tumor had grown outside the prostate gland, without any other known underlying medical issues, Tom was a candidate for almost all available treatment options.

"One of the best decisions I made was taking time for decision-making," he explains. Exploring nearby world-class medical institutions in Boston, Tom then traveled to California and New York for additional opinions about his **best course of action**. His advocacy also included **tapping into every information resource** he could imagine, including the Internet, friends, and co-workers. He asked a lot of questions, read everything he could, and had friends introduce him to other people affected by prostate cancer. All of these resources enabled Tom to intelligently and thoughtfully **compare risks and benefits**.

Tom ultimately decided on three months of hormone therapy followed by prostate surgery and radiation. He was completely back to normal a few months later. Life continued. With medical intervention, Tom and Kelly added to their family and joyfully welcomed twin boys, Aidan and Bobby, two years after Tom's surgery.



For three years, Tom's PSA remained normal. However, in 1999, numbers increased reflecting metastatic disease. The research phase began again. As she did with his initial diagnosis, Kelly helped gather information about options for Tom through medical literature and other resources. Kelly used this knowledge to serve as Tom's advocate with his medical team. She ensured he received the best possible care that included an understanding for Tom as a person instead of only a patient with a diagnosis. Kelly's **attentive, skillful advocacy** on behalf of Tom also enabled him to focus more on his needs. **Tom's self-care routines** included exercise, a healthy diet, meditation, acupuncture, herbal, and homeopathic therapies.

From 1999 to 2007, Tom benefited from many treatments, with the majority in clinical trials, while continuing hormone therapy to control his PSA. Bone and tissue scans did not show visible metastatic disease until a small lesion appeared on his adrenal gland in 2007. The spread of cancer from the prostate to the adrenal gland is highly unusual. Doctors confirmed this diagnosis through surgery on the adrenal gland.

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APCaP promotes prostate cancer awareness, education, and advocacy. Special emphasis is directed toward prostate cancer prevention strategies for healthy men in their 40s and 50s. APCaP supports these strategies through a quarterly newsletter, a website, physician-led educational lectures, exhibits at national meetings, patient peer counseling, as well as fundraising events. In addition, APCaP's board members serve as representatives on local, regional, state, and national prostate cancer related boards, commissions, committees, and advisory boards.

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Chemicals Increase Prostate Cancer Risk

Research suggests that levels of organochlorine pesticides in the blood are associated with a higher risk of prostate cancer. The findings suggest that exposure to these chemicals represents a cancer health risk and reducing exposures may help lower risk. These findings come from interviews conducted as part of the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey study.

Organochlorines such as DDT are a class of compounds that were used as pesticides starting in the 1940s and were no longer on the market in the United States by the 1990s. Although banned in some countries, these compounds can persist in the environment with exposures through food, air and water. Certain countries still heavily use them to control mosquitoes. The compounds resist breaking down, accumulate in the food chain, and cause health problems. Some of them can mimic estrogen hormones impacting reproduction, fertility, development, and overall health.

More information about the relationship between cancer and the environment, including strategies to reduce risk and support health, can be found through the following resources.

- **Environmental Working Group**

at www.ewg.com, including their sections called Our Food, Our Water, BodyBurden, Chemical Index, and more

- **The Collaborative on Health and the Environment**

at www.healthandenvironment.org, including their Toxins Database with information specific to prostate cancer and many other topics

Prostate Cancer's Cost to Human Lives

Prostate cancer is the second most common form of cancer diagnosed among American men. This year, approximately 220,000 new cases of the disease are expected to be diagnosed, and about 27,000 men will die of the disease

Meaty Factors in Prostate Cancer Risk

Men who eat a lot of red meats, and some types of processed meats, may have a higher risk of developing prostate cancer, according to a new study in the November 2009 American Journal of Epidemiology.

These findings come from research at the National Cancer Institute of more than 175,000 men followed for nine years. Those who ate the most red meats, and some types of processed meats, had higher risks of developing any stage of prostate cancer. High-heat cooking methods, especially grilling and barbecuing, were more associated with increased prostate cancer risk.

Men in the study were between the ages of 50 and 71. They were surveyed about their diets, including the quantity and types of meats typically consumed and their cooking methods. Researchers used that information to estimate the levels of certain potentially cancer-promoting chemicals in the men's diets.

Over nine years, 10,313 study participants developed prostate cancer and 419 died from the disease. The study results indicate that 20 percent of men with the highest intakes of red meats, which in this study included beef and pork, were 12 percent more likely than those who consumed the least to develop prostate cancer. Risk of advanced prostate cancer was one-third higher in those who ate the most red meats versus those who consumed the least. These statistics include adjustment for other factors such as smoking, exercise habits, and education.

Similar findings were seen with processed meats.

Researchers found that processed meats such as bacon, red-meat sausage, and hot dogs were related to higher prostate cancer risk, while white processed meats such as poultry cold cuts were not. Grilling and barbecuing were again linked to prostate cancer.

These findings are consistent with previous research indicating meats cooked at high temperatures may be linked to cancer. The cooking process produces various chemicals that are known to cause cancer in animals. High levels of nitrites and nitrates, which are chemicals used to preserve and flavor processed and cured meats such as ham, bacon, and sausage were associated with a higher risk of prostate cancer.

Researchers stated that their findings suggest potential mechanisms by which certain meats could promote prostate cancer. More research must be performed into the connection between specific types of meats, chemicals in those foods, and prostate cancer risk.

PSA RECOMMENDATIONS

As a reminder, healthy men over 50 should have an annual PSA blood test.

African Americans and people with a family history of prostate cancer should begin testing between age 35 and 40.

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Living with Prostate Cancer: A Proactive Model (Continued from page 1)

The procedure and recovery were more difficult than the prostate surgery, and while it was successful in removing the adrenal mass, additional disease was visible on the other adrenal gland shortly afterwards. At the end of 2007, after over 10 years of prostate cancer treatments, Tom started chemotherapy.

For Tom, chemotherapy has been both highly successful and debilitating. His PSA in January of 2008 was 405. After 18 months of chemotherapy in July 2009, his PSA was down to .8. As a result, his Dana Farber doctors granted Tom a chemo holiday. He has enjoyed time since then without conventional treatments other than ongoing hormone therapy. Tom continues to manage adverse events from chemotherapy. Along with common hair and weight loss, chemotherapy induced neuropathy has produced permanent numbness in Tom's fingers and toes and chronic pain requiring medications.

Tom and Kelly's fourteen-year odyssey has given them valuable perspectives about living with cancer. They refer to **three lessons** from Tom's experience that may be helpful to others.

1. Identify someone on the medical team who can be the main point of contact for care. In Tom's case, the point person is his extremely knowledgeable nurse practitioner at Dana Farber. The nurse practitioner knows the details of Tom's daily medical struggles and offers practical advice enriched with a wealth of medical knowledge.

2. Educate yourself and do not be afraid of asking others to help gather information. Friends and co-workers who want to help can be terrific resources to expand knowledge.

3. Use alternative therapies to supplement, not replace, conventional cancer care. Alternative therapies can be very effective when combined with conventional cancer care and have added benefits of enabling each person to be more proactive in their care.

"Do not perceive cancer as a death sentence. Few medical situations are hopeless. Focus on whatever aspect of hope applies to your situation," adds Kelly.

Tom continues to monitor his health and live a full life. His PSA is checked frequently. Additional conventional treatments will only be considered if his PSA increases substantially or Tom becomes symptomatic. The focal point of care is focused on how Tom feels. Cancer is one component in his life. Tom works as Chief of Staff to the Norfolk County Sheriff in Massachusetts. He tends to his three boys who often innocently forget that their Dad has cancer. The family goes to Red Sox baseball games. They enjoy joking around and frequently laugh together. In the midst of disease, there is a sense of normalcy and resilience.

Kelly Largey is a member of APCaP's Board of Directors. Tom, Kelly, Tommy, Aidan, and Bobby Largey live in Quincy, Massachusetts.

Exercise

In a new study that evaluated men with prostate cancer, findings suggest that as little as 15 minutes of exercise a day reduces overall mortality. This research was presented at the American Association for Cancer Research Frontiers in Cancer Prevention Research Conference.

- Men who engaged in three or more hours of exercises such as jogging, biking, swimming or playing tennis for about a half-hour per week had a 35 percent lower risk of overall mortality.

- Specific to walking, the researchers found that men who walked four or more hours a week had a 23 percent lower risk of all-cause mortality compared to men who walked less than 20 minutes per week.

- Men who walked 90 or more minutes at a normal to brisk pace had a 51 percent lower risk of death from any cause compared to men who walked less than 90 minutes at an easy walking pace.

The benefits are clear. Exercise impacts health. Develop a routine and make exercise a priority in your life.

Strategies to Reduce Cancer Risk



Ann Fonfa is an 18-year breast cancer survivor. “In the beginning, I never thought I’d live this long,” says Ann who recently celebrated her 62 birthday.

As with so many people diagnosed with cancer, Ann began her journey knowing nothing about the disease. “I did not even know I could choose my own doctor,” explains Ann. Diagnosed in 1993 and treated with surgery, Ann had a recurrence two years later. Even after three surgeries, the cancer continued to return. Along with what she did not know, Ann began to handle her health and navigate the cancer care system differently in the midst of her recurrence. When chemotherapy was recommended for her, Ann had concerns about adverse reaction due to her chemical sensitivity, and she therefore declined the treatment.

To support her health and healing, Ann aggressively began learning about alternative cancer therapies. For the last fifteen years, she developed expertise and benefited from interventions such as Chinese medicine, enzymes, supplements, detoxification protocols, mind-body-spirit practices, and other interventions. Since 2001, Ann has had no detectable cancer in her body.

The stories of long-term cancer survivors offer perspectives about self-care and scientific research study results confirm the efficacy of many strategies. **In a world where approximately half the population will be diagnosed with cancer, and evidence-based information exists about lifestyle changes reducing cancer risk, healthier habits offer the potential of significant benefits.**

Ann’s journey toward long-term cancer survivorship evolved into a non-profit organization she founded called the **Annie Appleseed Project** offering web-based resources about complementary and alternative cancer therapies and an annual patient education conference. An entire section of the website called **Prostate Corner** is devoted to the topic of prostate cancer. Edited by David Most, PhD, a prostate cancer survivor, topics in Prostate Corner include nutrition, herbs, supplements, exercise, and other subjects such as reports from prostate cancer conferences.

For cancer risk reduction, Ann recommends proactive lifestyle interventions in five areas.

Diet

Eat organic fruits and vegetables. Reduce meat and dairy intake. Avoid sugar, fried foods, and junk foods. Junk foods are called junk for a reason. Read your labels. Consume less salt.

Exercise

Regardless of the type of movement, physical exercise is key. Try to walk daily. This helps aid healthy circulation, including through activation of the lymphatic system that is essential to support a strong immune system and detoxification. Bike. Swim. Play tennis. Do whatever activities you enjoy.

Relaxing

Everyone has some level of stress. The challenge and opportunity is how we deal with the stress. Find ways to de-stress. Yoga. Meditation. Gardening. Golf. Engage in activities that help you find yourself. Be consciously aware of your own space when you are relaxing.

Detoxify

In an age where people are increasingly bombarded with toxins, detoxification is necessary. Parsley, cilantro, or dandelion leaf with fish reduces heavy metal absorption by helping to clear toxins such as mercury from the body. Fresh vegetable juices help cleanse the blood and support healthy cells.

Supplementation

Consult a clinical nutritionist for information about supplements. Blood and other laboratory tests can detect depletions and any levels in excess. A qualified nutritionist can develop an individualized program.

Ann encourages people with cancer to make informed decisions and find their individual path. **“There is no one right way. There are many ways. The goal is to find the way that is right for each person,”** says Ann.

As for her own survivorship, Ann practices a lifestyle focused on the five areas that she teaches about. She also refers to her attitude. “It is important how I live each day. I strive to make the most of it,” says Ann.

For more information, visit the **Annie Appleseed Project** at www.annieappleseedproject.org.

Lifestyle Changes Impact Prostate Cancer Risk & Development

David Servan-Schreiber, MD, PhD, authored an important response to an editorial by Otis Brawley, MD in the Journal of the National Cancer Institute about prostate cancer screening. Dr. Servan-Schreiber's article Screening for Prostate Cancer: When Is It a Good Idea? emphasizes the importance of screening due to the fact that "lifestyle choices have a considerable influence on how a small, localized prostate cancer will evolve." PSA screening may help motivate men to take better care of themselves. Dr. Servan-Schreiber provides a snapshot into some published research studies demonstrating the benefits of a healthy diet and regular exercise against prostate cancer risk and development.

- ♦ Autopsies demonstrate that Japanese men 50 or older that die in car accidents have the same amount of "micro-tumors" of the prostate as North-American or European men. However, mortality from prostate cancer in Japan is seven times lower compared to Western countries. When Japanese men move to the West, they develop aggressive prostate cancers at the same rate as Westerners. Their lifestyle in Japan prevents micro-tumors from developing.

- ♦ Studies have shown that lifestyle changes impact the biology of prostate cancer. Male Call has previously featured research by Dean Ornish, MD focused on men with prostate cancer under "watchful waiting" following biopsies confirming the presence of cancerous tumors. Programs including anti-cancer nutrition, physical activity, stress management, and emotional expression increased their blood's ability to destroy cancerous cells. Ornish's research showed that lifestyle changes impact genes of prostate cells by modifying their expression. These changes also activated the telomerase enzyme that protects chromosomes from premature aging.

- ♦ A Duke University study on men with prostate tumors scheduled for surgery that consumed three soup spoons of ground flaxseeds at breakfast every morning for a month experienced major reductions in their proliferation of cancerous cells after the surgery.

- ♦ A study at the University of California, Los Angeles suggested men with initially high PSA levels that drank 8 ounces of pomegranate juice every morning experienced a slower growth of their cancer. The men that drank the juice had their levels double in 54 months compared to 15 months in the men that did not drink pomegranate juice.

- ♦ A Japanese study indicated men that drank at least five small cups of green tea daily halved their risk of developing aggressive prostate cancer.

- ♦ Another Japanese study showed men that ate the largest quantities of vegetables rich in strongly colored red and orange vegetables had up to 83 percent fewer prostate cancers compared with those eating small amounts of these vegetables or none at all.

(Continued on page 7)



"I'd have been here sooner if it hadn't been for early detection."

Prevent Prostate Cancer by 2015

Lifestyle Changes (Continued from page 6)

- ♦ A large-scale Harvard study following more than 40,000 male health professionals since the 1980s found that consumption of tomato sauce twice a week reduced their probability of developing forms of cancer spreading beyond the prostate by 35 percent. The tomatoes must be cooked in oil to free as much lycopene as possible. Men that already had prostate cancer and consumed tomato sauce twice a week reduced the risk of their cancer progressing by 44 percent.
- ♦ The omega-3s specifically in oily fish have a considerable protective effect for men that are genetically predisposed to aggressive prostate cancer. In a Swedish study at the Karolinska Institute, men who carried the high-risk genes, but that ate oily fish such as salmon, sardines and mackerel twice a week, reduced their likelihood of developing cancer to the level of men with normal genes.
- ♦ A Harvard study indicated that every 1.25 ounce reduction in consumption of dairy products daily was associated with a 30 percent reduction in the risk of developing prostate cancer.
- ♦ Another Harvard study demonstrated that sustained physical exercise, specifically 3 to 4 hours per week of “fast walking” or an equivalent, was associated with 70 percent less risk of developing prostate cancer.
- ♦ In a Toronto hospital, a small study involved 2,000 IU of vitamin D3 daily to men already treated for prostate cancer, but whose PSA was again rising. In 14 patients, 9 saw their PSA stop increasing or even diminish. Overall, the time necessary for their PSA to double rose from an average of 14 months to an average 25 months once vitamin D3 was started.

More information about lifestyle changes to slow and reduce cancer risk can be found in **Dr. David Servan-Schreiber's book *Anticancer: A New Way of Life***. For related tips and resources, you can also visit his website at www.anticancerbook.com.

Cholesterol and Your Health

Low blood cholesterol levels reduce the risk of heart disease and cancer, according to two new studies in the November 2009 *Cancer Epidemiology, Biomarkers and Prevention*.

Men need to understand two important measurements of cholesterol.

- ♦ High-density lipoprotein, or HDL, is the good cholesterol. HDL transports bad cholesterol back to the liver to cleanse cholesterol from the bloodstream.
- ♦ Low-density lipoprotein, or LDL cholesterol, is the bad cholesterol. Research indicates an association between higher levels of LDL cholesterol and a risk of a heart attack.

The first steps toward healthy cholesterol levels are lifestyle improvements—regular exercise, weight loss, and a healthy diet.

- ♦ Increase HDL (“good”) cholesterol levels and decrease LDL (“bad”) cholesterol by getting regular aerobic exercise.



Exercise also helps relax blood vessels and lowers blood pressure, as well reduce cancer risk.

- ♦ Lower LDL (“bad”) cholesterol by eating foods low in saturated fat, cholesterol, and trans fat. Instead eat foods high in monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats such as fish with omega-3 fatty acids. In addition, eating soluble fibers such as oats, pectin, and psyllium will help reduce LDL cholesterol. Some fruits also help lower cholesterol.
- ♦ Medications such as statins help lower LDL cholesterol levels. They also help lower triglycerides and slightly increase HDL cholesterol levels..



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