

## Prevention and Management of Breast Cancer According to Ayurveda

By Jaisri M. Lambert, Ayurvedic Practitioner and Consultant  
408-378-2880 www.ayurveda-seminars.com

### Introduction

Ayurveda is the world's oldest holistic health science and is helpful today to understand the causes of high rates of abnormal cancerous cellular changes in the American female population.

Nutritional and internal risk factors and causes can be found in an accumulated effect of synthetic hormones used in the meat and dairy industry, chemical pesticides used in agriculture, chlorinated municipal water supplies, preservatives used in packaged foods and beverages, synthetic hormones such as birth control pills and hormone replacement therapies, genetically modified plants, white sugar, aluminum products such as deodorants, soda containers and many more.

Environmental causes also accumulate and are associated with electromagnetic disturbances from power lines, cell phones, etc, urban vehicle emissions, smoking, golf course lawn chemicals, fireworks, industrial wastes and dumping, etc., etc.

Social causes can also accumulate and may eventually combine with other factors to induce abnormal cellular changes which may be triggered by the use of bra wires, working on the menstrual cycle, having sex on the menses, suppression of grief and sadness, stress, cosmetic surgery, societal rage and anger, history of violence or abuse, etc.

Complications of cancer treatment may increase with incision, radiation exposure, synthetic drug use, family stress, feelings of isolation, powerlessness and weak support systems for those choosing self-healing.

### The Tripod of Life in Ayurveda

According to Ayurvedic medicine's creation model, the physical body has precipitated from a spiritual or causal body, and manifests via the intermediary of the astral or mental body. Physical symptoms are considered to be the effects of antecedent causes in these three main levels of existence. They are said to express as **Vata**, **Pitta** and **Kapha** in each of these three coverings: physical, mental and spiritual.

### Gunas or The Qualitative Expressions of Creation

Ayurvedic medicine is perhaps best known for its trimorphic approach to human existence and cosmology, expressed through the concepts of Vata (psycho-biological ether and air principle), Pitta (psycho-biological fire and water element) and Kapha (psycho-biological water and earth element). Vata, Pitta and Kapha are said to express themselves interactively through ten inherently self-balancing pairs of polar opposite qualities as follows:

Cold, cool	(Vata, Kapha)	Hot, warm	(Pitta)
Dry	(Vata)	Liquid, oily	(Pitta, Kapha)
Light	(Vata)	Heavy	(Kapha)
Sharp	(Pitta)	Smooth	(Pitta, Kapha)
Hard	(Kapha)	Soft	(Pitta)
Clear	(Vata)	Cloudy	(Kapha)
Subtle	(Vata)	Gross	(Kapha)
Dispersing	(Vata)	Penetrating	(Pitta)
Mobile	(Vata)	Static	(Kapha)
Spreading	(Pitta, Kapha)	Consolidating	(Kapha)

### Sapta-Dhatus or Seven Tissues Concept

In the Ayurvedic medical model, the physical body is considered to be a precipitation of the seven tissues. These tissue levels are said to metabolize them selves from our foods and thoughts, one from the other preceding tissue level as follows:

'Rasa'	(plasma, skin, lymph, breast milk), then
To 'Rakta'	(blood, liver, complexion, temperament), then
To 'Mamsa'	(muscle, tendons, liver, power), then
To 'Meda'	(adipose, white fat, brown fat, attachment), then

To 'Ashti'	(bone, periosteum, cartilage, joints), then
To 'Majja'	(marrow, nerve, fascia, endocrines) and finally
To 'Artava'	(uterus, fallopian tubes, ovaries, breasts, their contents and secretions).

The reproductive system is seen to be the most protected of all human structures and functions. Immunity ('Ojas'), intelligence ('Tejas') and life force ('Prana') ensure good cellular health if in balance, but if imbalanced can give rise to aberrant cellular behavior.

### The Female Reproductive System – Western and Eastern Views

Gonads develop in the fetus and by the sixth week of gestation, appearing as bulges that protrude into the embryo's ventral cavity. At about eight weeks of gestation, the gonads are clearly differentiated into ovaries or testes. At about the same time and soon thereafter are formed the uterus, vagina, clitoris, labia and vestibule. Human reproductive function is protected from very early in the cell division process.

'Artava Vaha Srotas', or the complete channels of the female reproductive system in Ayurvedic medicine include the uterus, ovaries, fallopian tubes, breasts, their linings and secretions such as Bartholin fluid, menstrual fluid, colostrum and breast milk. The Artava Vaha Srotas functions in intimate relationship with the endocrine system (Majja Dhatu) which performs the coordination of hormonal secretions within Artava, and helps protect immunity, metabolism and function of the most vital tissue level of the female human body.

Breasts are constructed of a complex network of branched tubules specialized for secretion of lactation fluid. Each mammary gland consists of about 15-20 lobes and lobules or compartments, separated by adipose tissue. Milk is secreted within the connective tissue of these compartments and is conveyed to a series of secondary tubules, then to the mammary ducts approaching the nipple. Now the ducts expand to form sinuses called ampullae, where milk may be stored.

In case of endometrial thickening, the areola may exhibit small hairs.

### Illustration

### Puberty

Puberty brings the onset of the ovulatory process, menstruation and fertility. Monthly alternating right or left side release of the immature ovum into the pelvic cavity occurs on about the 14<sup>th</sup> day of a 28-day lunar cycle, controlled by a regulating factor from the hypothalamus called Gonadotropin Releasing Factor (GnRF). GnRF stimulates the release of the follicle-stimulating hormone (FSH) from the anterior pituitary and in turn stimulates estrogens to secrete from the ovarian follicles. Estradiol is synthesized mostly in the liver and ovaries from cholesterol and acetyl coenzyme A respectively. Luteinizing Hormone (LH), also secretes from the anterior pituitary, helping trigger the maturation of follicular contents. These dramatic hormonal changes signal transformation from childhood to womanhood, and may bring emotional confusion. Secondary sex characteristics such as breast development, hair growth and voice pitch also signal maturing of the life process at puberty.

### Conception, Birth and Breastfeeding

A woman's choices and experiences in matters of fertility, family planning, sexuality and pregnancy are central to her identity and health. Her intense hormonal and emotional fluctuations involve her entire being and bring deep-seated spiritual unfolding. If her experience is positive, health is more likely, however, if

unresolved emotions remain within the connective tissue from the past or current trauma, her sensitive reproductive channels may become vulnerable to stagnation, lymphatic congestion and build up of toxins.

### Menopause

Menopause is only one of a series of phases that leads to reduced fertility, irregular or absent menstruation and a variety of physical, psychological and spiritual changes. Uterine cancer peaks at about age 65 years, but cervical cancer is more common in younger women. Breast cancer is the leading cause of death among women between 40 and 60. Some women experience hot flashes, copious sweating, headaches, hair loss, muscular pains emotional instability, etc. Symptoms can be understood in terms of qualitative influences of Vata, Pitta and Kapha. In the postmenopausal woman there can be some atrophy of the ovaries, fallopian tubes, uterus, vagina, external genitalia and breasts.

### Digestion

Digestion is the foundation of the tissue formation process and health itself, according to Ayurveda. Quality of foods and thoughts enter the general circulation to form the deeper organs and structures. Cancerous changes show that there is an imbalance of the tri-dosha with toxins. The food program becomes the avenue of tissue renewal with fresh, live, doshically suitable foods restoring competent digestion, leaving no residue of unprocessed, undigested toxic substances or 'ama'.

### Management Strategies for Repair and Maintenance of Breast Tissue

To address disease or imbalance in the deepest, most protected tissue of the human body, is to take a holistic approach involving inner and outer management tools.

### Meditation

Self-care strategies include first and foremost, meditation, an essential tool in today's stressful world. Meditation is natural to the human being and requires no fees or techniques. Simply sit quietly and watch your breath. The flow of mind will subside and the attention will rest in the 'third eye', where renewal occurs by itself. As the mind and emotions become refreshed, so the body restores and rejuvenates itself, and insight increases. Meditation is a direct communion with one's divinity or Love. In meditation, one meets the only constant of life, that which supports the soul to rise above suffering. Meditation helps to solve the mysteries of life such as "Why?" or "What am I?"

### Food Choices

Food choices begin with avoidances of known carcinogens such as preservatives, chemical fertilizers, chlorinated water, synthetically fed animal foods, as well as packaged foods, frozen foods and microwaved foods, etc. Choosing organically produced foods, whole foods and natural foods is a step in the right direction. Choosing fresh, live, local foods prepared daily from doshically balancing items will help refresh tissue quality. Food combining, cooking methods and right timing of meals according to Ayurveda will help restore your natural biorhythms. Purified water will help flush toxins and prevent further deposits, when taken according to thirst.

### Bras, Exercise and the Lymphatic System

The lymphatic system must be helped to cleanse itself daily in order to avoid any build-up of unprocessed fluids, which if long-standing can bring increasing stagnation to the breast and axilla areas. Bra wires impede the flow of life force along key meridians and lymphatic channels. Breast-conscious bra designs offer a healthier choice over pinching, binding garments. Daily walking, yoga, tai chi, dancing etc. (except on menses) help to maintain healthy lymphatic circulation. Each individual woman needs to be uniquely fitted for bras to ensure optimal postural enhancement and lymphatic health. The application of deodorant should be in an upward direction to help enhance lymphatic circulation.

### Massage Therapy

Breast self-massage with castor oil or blend with gentle outward strokes at bedtime (except on menses) will help reduce breast swellings, fibroids, cysts, pre-calcifications and lumpy areas. Wear an old cotton T-shirt. Professional, experienced Ayurvedic massage therapy is both a preventative and therapeutic strategy, and requires that the therapist has specialized training. Neem oil may be helpful for women to prevent and

manage breast cancer. Medicated oils are chosen according to their individual medicinal properties in relation to each person's particular needs.

### Right Use of Time

Resting on menstrual cycle is suggested in the medical scriptures of Ayurvedic medicine, to help replicate the 'Red Tent' or 'Moon Lodge' of traditional cultures. Eating before 6 or 7pm helps ensure sound sleep, proper assimilation and daily rejuvenation of the gastro-intestinal tract. Eating the largest meal at the time of greatest hunger between about 11am and 3pm will help support healthy tissue formation. Working for livelihood to one half one's capacity will help ensure fatigue and exhaustion do not build up.

### Thermographs

Thermography is a proven, safe technology for early detection of breast disease. Thermal sensors provide more accurate, less invasive and less costly information than mammography. There is no harmful radiation. If the cancer has spreading quality, thermographs do not risk spread of cancerous cells through the painful compression process of mammograms. Thermography provides a broader range of information than mammograms, which can be interpreted in Ayurvedic terms of Vata, Pitta and Kapha.

### Relationships

Relationships are complex social interactions infused with memory and unresolved emotions. If one has lost a child, or a relationship has ended in disappointment, if shock or rage is unresolved, then toxic, morbid feelings may build up in the connective tissues. These emotional toxins may combine with environmental, social and nutritional factors to increase darkness and stagnation. To refresh the tissues, cells and their communications, Ayurveda suggests, panchakarma, the classical cleansing and rejuvenation treatments for management and prevention of disease. To forgive all wrongs, real and imagined occurs by itself through the gentle process of loving communication.

### Panchakarma or Ayurvedic Cleansing Therapies

Once a patient has undergone the palliation phase of the wellness process, they may become a suitable candidate for further cleansing and re-building therapies. The purpose of panchakarma is to help restore the digestive power of all tissues and levels of consciousness. The treatments involve specialized massage therapies (abhyanga), medicated fomentation or steam therapy (swedan), herbal dusting therapy (utvartana), stress-release mindstream therapy (shirodhara), enema therapy (basti) and other possible specialty therapies. Panchakarma includes preparatory and follow-up periods, individually tailored and carefully followed by the practitioner. Herbal supplements may help to further support the follow-up from panchakarma towards normalization of metabolic processes such as appetite, elimination and sleep.

### Herbs for Internal and External Use

Neem, purified guggulu, red clover, chaparral, burdock root, dandelion, flax oil, barley grass, Oregon grape root, aloe vera gel and many other antioxidant substances can be used individually or in combination with one another to help purify the blood and liver. Their bitter taste can support eradication of abnormal cells. Consult a professional herbalist knowledgeable in drug interactions and individualized herbal combinations for internal formulas and external pastes or oils.

### Conclusion

Ayurvedic therapies mentioned here are not the only methods available from this comprehensive science of Ayurveda, but will help us begin to move forward into regaining health and teaching our daughters to keep their bodies free from toxins and impurities even in modern times.

### Acknowledgements & References:

Dr. Vasant Lad, Ayurvedic Institute, 505-291-9698 ayurveda.com  
Heather Nagel There's No Place Like Om Massage 831-331-6103 theresnoplacelikeommassage.com  
Linda Andrews, The Perfumer's Apprentice 831-???? perfumersapprentice.com  
Maria Monti, The Healthy Bra Company, 877-294-4447 healthybras@aol.com  
Nancy Gardner, Thermography 415-460-9722 healthybreasts.info.  
Principles of Anatomy & Physiology, Tortora and Anagnostakos

Suggested Reading:

Ayurveda, The Science of Self-Healing, by Dr. Vasant Lad  
Prakruti, Your Ayurvedic Constitution, by Dr. Robert Svoboda  
Perfect Health, by Dr. Deepak Chopra  
Ayurvedic Cooking for Self-Healing, by Vasant and Usha Lad  
Woman's Best Medicine, by Dr. Nancy Lonsdorf