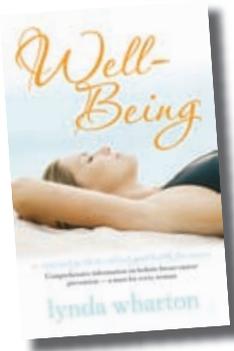


# Healthy Nutrition For Your Breasts



## The Breast Health Diet

Extract from *Wellbeing – an essential guide to vibrant good health for women* by Lynda Wharton

## Green for go, go, go

In a word, if it's green and it's a vegetable, it's good for you and your breasts.

Vegetables and fruit (organic if possible) are a vital element of a breast-healthy diet. Forget the 'five-plus a day' mantra, striving instead to eat nine delicious servings of a wide range of fruits and vegetables daily. It's really not as daunting as it sounds. Try having fresh fruit on your muesli or porridge in the morning; snack on fruit for morning and afternoon tea; make a huge and varied salad at lunch time; and serve a salad or three different vegetables with dinner every night. Invest in a quality juicer and experiment with different juices as 'pick me ups' throughout the day. Fruits and vegetables help to keep breasts healthy in a number of ways. They are by far the richest source of dietary antioxidants and phytochemicals, helping to protect breast cells from the damaging effects of unstable molecules called free radicals. ⇨

## Our own body creates free radicals as a by-product of the never-ending cellular energy production cycle.

Stress increases free radical production, as does cigarette smoking, consumption of rancid fats, and exposure to environmental pollutants and ultraviolet light. Free radicals are constantly bombarding the fatty cellular membranes surrounding every cell, and the DNA of every cell in the body. This causes cellular destruction, or alteration of the DNA codes within a cell, and can lead to the development of cancer, premature ageing and chronic disease.

While all fruits and vegetables contain antioxidants, there are some which deserve special accolades. These include all berries (especially blueberries); dark green vegetables (spinach, silverbeet, broccoli, bok choy); and bright red and orange fruits and vegetables (carrots, yams, kumara, pumpkin, red peppers, apricots, plums, tomatoes). Fruits and vegetables supply antioxidant nutrients such as beta-carotene (and a whole range of other carotenes), selenium, and vitamin C, CoQ10 and lipoic acid; and a huge array of phytochemicals with powerful antioxidant properties such as lycopene, resveratrol, flavanols and flavones.



There is an established link between a high dietary intake of these antioxidants and a reduced risk of breast cancer and a variety of other cancers.

Interestingly, while a high intake of fruits and vegetables correlates with decreased breast cancer risk in premenopausal women, swallowing handfuls of antioxidant supplements containing vitamins A, C and E, selenium and zinc has not been found to offer the same benefits.

**Don't delude yourself into thinking that you'll be okay if you're eating a rubbish diet and popping nutritional supplements to compensate!**

The living 'green foods' contain a complex array of vital phytochemicals, with powerful cancer-fighting properties, which are generally missing from most nutritional supplements.

**These phytochemicals (the word simply means plant-based chemicals) have powerful antioxidant properties which help safeguard the DNA in our cells from damage by free-radicals. Some also protect the process of methylation which is critical for the activation of cancer suppressing genes.**

Yet others stimulate our own immunity and block the growth of abnormal cells which can eventually become a cancer.

Besides supplying essential nutrients and antioxidants, fruits and vegetables offer breast protection in other ways too.

## Maximising Breast Protection

### by eating fruit and vegetables

- Buy fruits and vegetables in small amounts regularly, to avoid lengthy storage and loss of vital nutrients.
- Eat raw fruits and vegetables as well as cooked ones.
- Steam vegetables or stir-fry them lightly to avoid nutrient degradation.
- Chop vegetables just before cooking: nutrient breakdown is more rapid once vegetables have been chopped.
- Aim to eat nine servings of fruits and vegetables every day.
- Eat a generous serving of dark green, leafy vegetables every day.
- Eat Brassica vegetables such as broccoli, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts and cabbage daily. Cruciferous vegetables should be lightly cooked and thoroughly chewed to maximise their cancer-preventing benefits. Avoid boiling cruciferous vegetables (or any others) as this destroys up to 80 per cent of their cancer-fighting phytochemicals.
- Keep the freezer well stocked with free-flow bags of berries such as blueberries, boysenberries, and raspberries. Add a daily serve of berries to breakfast, or mix with acidophilus yoghurt for a healthy snack. Frozen berries are delicious on a hot summer day – simply pour out a cupful and crunch while frozen.
- Boost chlorophyll intake by drinking barley greens, wheat grass or chlorella and adding a teaspoon of spirulina to smoothies or juices.

They are a rich source of green chlorophyll which helps support the body in the detoxification of the environmental chemicals we are exposed to. Some phytochemicals help protect us from the acceleration of cell production stimulated by oestrogen. Oestrogen is a vital hormone essential for our health throughout our life. Contrary to common belief, we continue to produce and need oestrogen even after we have passed through menopause. There are several different forms of oestrogen in the female body – some are potentially troublesome in terms of stimulating breast tumours, while others have the ability to actually protect us from breast cancers. The relative balance between ‘friendly’ and ‘unfriendly’ oestrogen in our body is partly determined by how our body metabolises, breaks down and excretes oestrogen. Some plant compounds actually help to change potentially harmful oestrogen into beneficial forms of oestrogen. The Brassica family of vegetables (commonly called cruciferous vegetables) are especially useful for enhancing this process. The Brassica group includes: broccoli (which is especially beneficial), Brussels sprouts, cabbage and cauliflower. Of these, broccoli and Brussels sprouts are considered to be cancer-fighting super-heroes, closely followed by cabbage. These vegetables (especially broccoli) contain a chemical called indole-3-carbinol or I3C. This chemical helps to convert the potentially troublesome ‘strong’ oestrogens (known as 4- and 16-oestrogens) into the benign, and even protective, 2-oestrogens. In some ways, I3C could almost be considered to be nature’s version of tamoxifen, blocking undesirable oestrogenic effects in breast cells. Women who eat 1 to 1.5 servings of Brassica vegetables every day reduce their breast-cancer risk by 25 per cent.

Broccoli is an especially breast-friendly vegetable. Not only is it rich in I3C, but it also contains large amounts of a compound called D-glucorate which supports the detoxification and breakdown of both oestrogen produced in the body and toxic xeno-oestrogens from the environment. Finally, plants including fruits, vegetables, legumes and grains provide us with dietary fibre. Residues of a high-fibre

diet bind with oestrogen in the gut and excrete it from the body, preventing the resorption and recirculation of oestrogen in the bloodstream. A high-fibre diet also helps to feed and support friendly, beneficial bacteria in the gut. These bacteria play a role in oestrogen breakdown and excretion, and so are vital for breast health.

*“People are applying the precautionary principle to their own lives by purchasing food that has not been produced by industrial methods. From the simple stance of hazard avoidance, organically produced food is the best option that we have.” – Dr Vyvyan Howard, toxico-pathologist at the University of Liverpool, United Kingdom.*

## Fabulous Folate

Not only do fruits and vegetables provide us with a plethora of antioxidant nutrients, they are also our richest natural source of folate. Most women associate the need for this B-vitamin with pregnancy. Taking folic acid supplements prior to conception and during the first trimester of pregnancy is now standard practice, with a resulting proven reduction in the incidence of babies suffering from spina bifida. This same B-vitamin plays an important part in keeping breast cells healthy. Dietary folate helps us detoxify both oestrogen produced in the body and environmental xeno-oestrogens we absorb or ingest. Folate stimulates the body to produce a powerful natural antioxidant called SAM-e. Women who are lacking in folate have a higher incidence of chromosome breaks in their cells (this is a precursor to the development of an abnormal cell) compared with folate-rich women. While multivitamin formulas usually contain around 400mcg of folic acid

per tablet, much greater amounts can be obtained by including generous quantities of folate-rich foods in your daily diet. ⇨



### The following foods are good folate sources:

- leafy green vegetables (spinach, silverbeet, broccoli, bok choy)
- beetroot
- asparagus
- liver
- kidney
- oranges
- pineapples
- bananas
- berries
- brewer’s yeast
- bean sprouts
- wheat germ
- soya beans and soya flour

# Drink Up Your Greens

Next to water, tea is the most popular beverage in the world. Stand in front of the tea section at any supermarket and you are guaranteed to be overwhelmed by the huge range of flavours and colours, many of them with the added therapeutic benefits of herbs.

In the West, where black tea has traditionally been the beverage of choice, green tea is rapidly gaining popularity as news of its health-giving properties spreads. Green tea is bursting with polyphenol compounds known as flavonols, or commonly known as catechins. The most impressive of these catechins is called EGCG (epigallocatechin gallate), which has the ability to block cell reproduction in the earliest stages of cancer development. Not all green teas have the same EGCG content, and in general it is the Japanese teas, rather than Chinese teas, which have the greatest concentration of this cancer-fighting compound. Epidemiological studies looking at

Japanese women have suggested that drinking green tea may slow the progression of breast cancer. The Aichi Cancer Centre in Japan has performed much of the research relating to the benefits of green tea. Its studies show that early-stage cancer patients who drink three or more cups of green tea daily have a decreased risk of recurrence of their cancer. Rat studies have compared groups of rats given water or green tea regularly.

When primed with a cancer-producing substance, the rats drinking the green tea still developed breast tumours, but their tumours developed later, were less invasive and weighed 70 per cent less than those of the water-fed group.

Most of the studies suggest that a minimum of 3-5 cups of well-brewed green tea daily offer the most potent cancer protection, and interestingly it is the green tea still containing its naturally occurring caffeine (albeit four times less than in black tea) which shows the greatest cancer-preventative properties.



## ☼ Antioxidant Superfoods

Colourful fruits and vegetables are especially rich in antioxidants if they are coloured all the way through, not just on the skin. Examples are berries and tree tomatoes. The following foods are especially rich antioxidant sources:

- ☼ dark green leafy vegetables (spinach, silverbeet, broccoli, bok choy)
- ☼ dark red or orange fruits and vegetables (peppers, tree tomatoes, apricots, carrots, yams, pumpkin, kumara)
- ☼ all berries, especially blueberries, cherries and black grapes
- ☼ fruit juices, especially blackcurrant, grape, cranberry and apricot juice
- ☼ prunes and raisins
- ☼ garlic and onions
- ☼ green tea and black tea
- ☼ dark chocolate – 70 per cent cocoa content (while this is a delicious and useful antioxidant source, remember that it packs a significant calorie punch too!)
- ☼ herbs and spices, especially turmeric

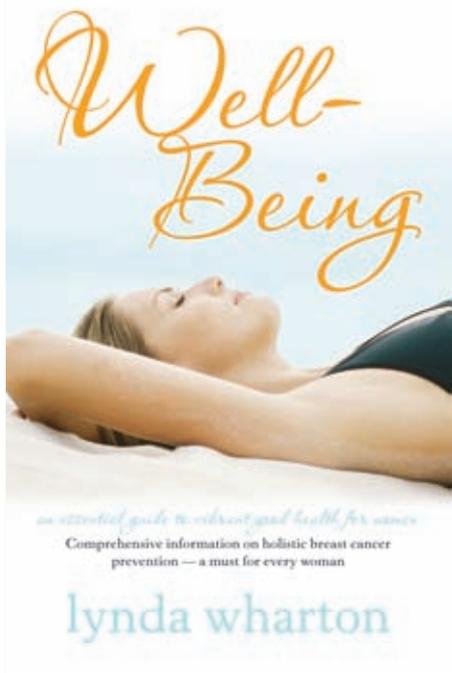
Lynda Wharton is a wellknown name in the field of complementary therapy in New Zealand as a result of more than 20 years practising as a Registered Traditional Chinese Acupuncturist and Naturopath. Lynda's speciality has always been the drug free, holistic treatment of women's health problems. She is a passionate communicator, and has enjoyed an equally rewarding career as a health researcher, writer and book author. Her latest book, *Wellbeing – an essential guide to vibrant good health for women*, has been enthusiastically received by readers and reviewers alike.

**Wellbeing** is an absolutely essential resource for every New Zealand woman whatever her age. Written in a chatty, warm and understandable style, this is a book to be kept on the book shelf and repeatedly dipped into over the years.

Lynda decided to write **Wellbeing** because she saw a need to create a life-changing resource to answer all the questions she encounters on a daily basis in her clinic. She knows from first hand experience that many women are willing to take personal responsibility for their health, and make the necessary changes, if they are just given the resources and empowerment they need. **Wellbeing** provides just such a resource.

Breast cancer effects one in 10 New Zealand women. Lynda has devoted 100 pages of her book to the subject of breast cancer prevention. "I am tired of seeing women in my clinic in the midst of a battle with breast cancer. There is so much we now know about the prevention of this terrible disease, and yet most women are completely unaware of how they can influence their risk through dietary and lifestyle choices on a daily basis.

Even if they read nothing else in the book, every New Zealand and Australian woman owes it to herself and her family to read these 100 pages ... and apply what they learn," she says.



Extract (pp246-254) used with author's permission. *Wellbeing – an essential guide to vibrant good health for women* by Lynda Wharton. Published by HarperCollinsPublishers, ISBN 1-86950-618-9, RRP\$39.99. Available in all good book stores and on line at: [www.lyndawharton.com](http://www.lyndawharton.com)

Allison Roe MBE:

"After reading **Wellbeing**, I can honestly say that I am excited when I think of the positive impact that this highly relevant, information packed book will have on the health and happiness of so many women."

Fitness Life Magazine editor

Tania Greig:

"I highly recommend **Wellbeing** as an essential reference book for all New Zealand women." ✍



**Do you suffer from Indigestion?**



For the relief of:

- Heartburn
- Gas
- Bloating
- Belching
- Constipation
- Low Energy
- Acid Reflux

Source Naturals Essential Enzymes is more effective as it targets all the nutritional components of your meal, not just the protein, but also carbohydrates, fat and fibre.



An effective and popular formula that our customers buy again and again!

Available in selected health shops and pharmacies nationwide.

Always read the label and use only as directed.

Distributed by



2 Dunlop Road, Onekawa, Napier  
 Freephone: 0800 439 631  
[support@naturalmeds.co.nz](mailto:support@naturalmeds.co.nz)