

# Breast Health from the Inside Out



■ Dr. Danny Jui, ND

Sir William Osler, the Canadian physician and the father of modern scientific medicine once said that “more important than knowing what kind of disease the patient has is knowing what kind of patient has the disease.” This wisdom rings true for many breast cancer patients. The environmental context experienced by each patient is unique. Therefore, instead of just treating the diagnosis of breast cancer, it is essential to treat the whole person, supporting each patient’s unique external, internal, physiological and emotional environment for optimal health and recovery.

## External Environment

Most types of breast cancer are associated with too much exposure to external sources of estrogen-like chemicals called xenoestrogens. These substances mimic estrogen and disrupt the normal hormonal balance in the body. One example is Bisphenol A (BPA) found in plastic products. Not only does BPA contribute to the increased risk of breast cancer, the exposure may reduce the sensitivity to chemotherapy treatment of certain breast tumours. Other xenoestrogens are found in pesticides, food preservatives, cleaning products and personal hygiene products. It is therefore important to identify specific culprits in your home environment and replace these products with natural alternatives.

## Internal Environment


In addition to removing xenoestrogens in the external environment, the internal environment of hormonal balance needs to be supported. Excess estrogen is normally processed by the liver, then stored in bile and finally eliminated through the intestinal tract. This process is aided by dietary fibre which works like a sponge and carries the estrogen out with other waste. The more fibre there is in the diet, the better this natural disposal system works.

## Physiological Environment

The immune system is another key component in cancer care. Immune cells are responsible for targeting and destroying cancer cells. Naturopathic interventions such as IV vitamin injections are often used to support the immune system and may be appropriately incorporated with the conventional treatment schedule, depending on the type and timing of a patient’s treatment. It is very important to work with an experienced naturopathic doctor in this area to prevent possible interactions with standard treatments such as surgery, chemotherapy and radiation.

## Emotional Environment

In mind/body medicine, breast cancer is often associated with the emotions of suppressed anger, frustration and worry. Interestingly, these emotions are associated with the liver in Chinese Medicine which is also responsible for digestion and hormonal health. Mind/body interventions such as acupuncture, cognitive restructuring, breathing techniques and stress reduction have shown to enhance the therapeutic experience and outcome for patients going through cancer. Being aware of your emotions and embracing them as part of your healing journey can be very empowering. This sense of autonomy and awareness can contribute greatly to the process of healing.

It is the terrain of the soil that determines the health of the garden. By removing xenoestrogens from the environment, supporting the inner workings of digestive, hormonal and immune health and embracing the emotional context of each individual’s healing journey, patients are no longer identified by just their disease and free to be their own gardeners, working towards optimal health from the inside out. 

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