



13 September 2016

Carly Morrissey

Editor

Big Rigs

**Re: Using food to combat big C, 3 September 2016**

Dear Carly,

The Dietitians Association of Australia (DAA) is pleased to see the topic of nutrition being discussed in Big Rigs online. However, we were alarmed to read the article by Michelle Peden **'Using food to combat big C'** (3 September 2016).

We found parts of this article quite concerning, with much of the advice on diet and cancer not based on scientific evidence. DAA is concerned that this could leave your readers confused and at risk of changing some aspects of their diet unnecessarily.

Ms Peden suggests that cancer can be cured through diet. Much of her article focusses on adopting a more alkaline diet (or eliminating 'acid-forming' foods) to prevent or cure cancer. However, there is no evidence (specifically, research involving humans) to support the idea that an alkaline diet may prevent or cure cancer. If people were to limit or remove the acid-forming foods Ms Peden suggests, this would mean missing out on foods like lean meat and wholegrains, which provide important nutrients.

Ms Peden also recommends people avoid 'carbohydrate-dense' foods, and claims that cancer 'loves sugar'. When it comes to carbohydrates, DAA feels it's important to distinguish between highly-processed carbohydrates and quality wholegrains. We agree with Ms Peden's advice to limit food and drinks containing added sugar, such as soft drinks. But a body of research supports the positive health benefits of eating grain-based foods.

On a positive note, Ms Peden's advice to eat vegetables and legumes is in line with advice from the Cancer Council of Australia.

To reduce cancer risk, DAA recommends:

- Eating plenty of vegetables and legumes/beans, as well as fruit and grain foods (especially wholegrain)
- Being a healthy weight – which includes balancing the amount of energy (kilojoules) taken in with the amount of energy expended each day
- Being physically active
- Limiting alcohol consumption (if a person chooses to drink)
- Limiting intake of processed meats.

And these lifestyle factors should be targeted in combination. In addition, it's important to remember that when it comes to what we eat, there is no one-size-fits all approach. DAA recommends seeking individual nutrition advice from an Accredited Practising Dietitian. We'd be grateful if you'd consider sharing these guidelines with your readers.

We also wanted to let you know that DAA has 23 media-trained Spokespeople (all Accredited Practising Dietitians) available to speak, or to contribute evidence-based and engaging editorial content, on nutrition related topics. To

organise an interview with any of our Spokespeople, please contact Felicity Curtain on [media@daa.asn.au](mailto:media@daa.asn.au) or telephone 0409 661 920.

We thank you for discussing nutrition issues with your readers through Big Rigs. Please let us know if you have any questions regarding our concerns over this particular article.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Claire Hewat". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Claire Hewat AdvAPD

CEO

Dietitians Association of Australia