

# Letter to the Editor: The Pundit Speaks

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## “Cancer Killed By Peroxide Produced From Vitamin C”

Cancer is rapidly gaining on heart disease as the number one killer in America and some of the things we do can make cancer worse. Large clinical trials have found that antioxidant supplements, which many gobble down daily, can *worsen* some cancers. Antioxidants can block the killing of leukemia, lymphoma, myeloma, and human cancers of the breast, lung pancreas, liver, colon, rectum and endometrium. This was shocking since antioxidants are widely claimed to be beneficial. In my book, *Danger of Excessive Antioxidants in Cancer Patients*, I clearly demonstrated the harmful effects of antioxidants in cancer patients. I found twenty-seven (27) types of human cancer cell types and nine (9) murine (rodent) cancer cell types that can be killed by reactive oxygen species and in which the killing can be blocked by antioxidants, thereby providing antioxidant protection and shielding of the cancer cells. Antioxidants also increase the spread of cancer cells (metastasis). I have extensively researched the role of prooxidants in the killing of cancer and presented my findings in my book, *Cancer Killing, Suppression and Protection: The Howes Answer to Cancer*, available at amazon.com. Studies over the past decade have repeatedly substantiated my theory. Vitamin C (ascorbic acid) is usually considered to be an antioxidant but it also can be a prooxidant when in high concentrations or in the presence of metal compounds. Humans cannot make vitamin C. Instead, we need to consume this essential vitamin in our diet. Mark Levine, from the Molecular and Clinical Nutrition Section at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in Bethesda, MD, and colleagues showed that in the presence of metals, vitamin C produces hydrogen peroxide. This molecule is a powerful oxidant and is very toxic to cells - especially cancer cells. However, targeting cancer is not as simple as eating some extra oranges each day. Our bodies are extremely good at maintaining healthy levels of vitamin C when it is consumed in our diet. And when there is too much vitamin C in the system, it is simply excreted in the urine. Levine showed that administering vitamin C by injection at high levels allows it to outsmart our body's control mechanisms. Dr. Lewis Cantley, from Weill Cornell Medicine in New York City, NY, and colleagues also found that vitamin C had a strong pro-oxidant effect in a study using colorectal cancer cells. Treatment with high levels of vitamin C caused enough oxidative damage to these cells to kill them by a cell death process known as apoptosis (cellular suicide).

In the America that I love, I recommend that you do not unadvisedly take excessive amounts of antioxidants. I predict that an increase in prooxidants should provide an alternative death pathway to battle cancer.

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