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Improving Anesthesia Outcomes



Techniques used in breast cancer surgery may lead the way to quicker and easier recovery for other patients.

by
William C. Dooley, M.D.
Chief of Breast Surgery, The Johns Hopkins Oncology Center

For many patients, the worst part of having surgery is the resulting nausea and vomiting caused by anesthesia. Although they might seem like minor, temporary problems, post-operative nausea and vomiting can slow recovery, interfere with pain medication, and leave patients depressed and frustrated.

This common post-operative consequence is so significant that in a survey taken a few years ago, nearly 85 percent of women who had undergone breast cancer surgery at the Johns Hopkins Breast Center listed nausea and vomiting over pain as their greatest problem following surgery. But after years of research and systematic observation, this problem has nearly been eliminated here.

In fact, we recently reached a treat-

ment milestone: during a 6-month period, not a single patient who underwent breast cancer surgery here reported any post-op nausea and vomiting. If our formula for success could be used as a model for other types of surgery, thousands of people each year might have an easier time recuperating – both physically and emotionally.

Many Small Steps

It took years worth of small steps for us to conquer post-operative nausea and vomiting for our breast cancer patients. But over the years, we managed to make four key breakthroughs that, together, have reduced the number of patients who experience post-operative nausea and vomiting from 85 percent to a

mere 2 percent.

- Our first step was to identify the anesthetics least likely to cause nausea and vomiting and use those exclusively in surgery. We achieved this by surveying post-operative patients on the amount of nausea and vomiting they experienced and noting the specific anesthetics that were used. This alone reduced the

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Future Super Foods?



Phytochemicals have been on the front lines in the dietary battle against cancer. Will they help birth a new breed of better disease-preventing foods – and more nutritional-savvy shoppers?

by
Jed W. Fahey, M.S.
Brassica Chemoprotection Laboratory,
Department of Pharmacology & Molecular Sciences

Only a few years ago, hardly anyone knew about beta-carotene. Today, it's virtually a household word, and its cancer-fighting potential, along with other so-called "phytochemicals," is the subject of much debate.

The study of phytochemicals is the subject of a well-seasoned scientific discipline, literally referring to the thousands of chemicals contained within plants. In recent years, the term has been popularized to refer in

particular to plant chemicals that may affect health.

Along with beta-carotene, research suggests that many other phytochemicals such as isoflavones, sulforaphane, limonene, flavonoids

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