

Paradox of Alkaline Diet / Anti-Oxidant Supplements: Diametrical Effects of Too Much Too Good Stuff

By Simon Yu, MD

Too much of what we think of as “good for you” might not be. However it might be even more harmful than you may think. Professor Randolph Howes, MD., Ph.D. spoke on the danger and myth of the virtue of anti-oxidant supplements at the ACAM (American College of Advanced Medicine) conference in 2013. He said anti-oxidant supplements, especially fat soluble beta-carotene and vitamin E, are harmful. He is backing up his claims with a whole list of references.

His lecture seems contrarian. Therefore, I have decided to write about the nature of the paradox, diametrical effects of alkaline diet, and the anti-oxidant supplements myth. Diametric means being at the opposite extremes as “in diametric contradiction.”

An alkaline diet and anti-oxidant supplements have been long standing recommendations by alternative, integrative medical doctors and holistic nutritionists. These are the foundational nutritional therapy for all chronic disease. In general, I believe and follow an alkalizing diet and anti-oxidant supplements for myself and for most of my patients. I said “I believe” because every book and lecture at conferences I attend always say to alkalize the body and take more anti-oxidant. I have been well indoctrinated by experts.

Is it possible that a health guru has been promoting the wrong kind of diet for millions of people by recommending an alkalizing diet and anti-oxidant supplements? The expert’s mantra is to alkalize with an Alkalizing Diet, eat more fruits and green vegetables, and drink alkalized water until green sprouts come out of your ears. I believed them. I tried it on myself and my patients. The responses have not always been consistent but rather unpredictable.

If your patients do not respond to an Alkalizing Diet, the tendency is to push more green vegetables because you thought they are not getting enough vegetables. However, they feel worse the more they eat fruits and vegetables. Why? What is happening to their bodies?

My first experience was twenty some years ago when I started exploring alternative medicine while I was working in managed health care. A young man came to see me with a general malaise and fatigue. His dietary habit was terrible with eating sugar coated cup cake, donuts, chips, soda, and fast foods as his main diet. I told him to stop eating all junk foods, eat more fruits and vegetables, and drink water.

One month later, I was expecting him to feel much better. To my surprise, he told me that he felt worse than ever before. I thought he was going through a detox phase with Herxheimer’s reaction and told him to continue more fruits and vegetables and no junk food. When he came back again, he did not feel any better. He told me he is going back to his usual diet.

I was at a loss, speechless, and dumbfounded that my recommendation, which is based on nutritional experts’ alkalizing diet, made him feel worse. Since then I learned about biochemical individuality as discussed by Roger Williams, metabolic individuality (fast or slow oxidizer) discussed by George Watson, and food allergies discussed by my mentor, Harvey Walker, MD, Ph.D. General dietary recommendations are far more complex than I had imagined. Recommendations must reflect the overall biological terrain of the individual based on pH (acid/base), redox (reduction oxidation potential), and resistivity. Too much of what we think is good for us may do more harm than we may realize.

For example, some cancer patients are too alkaline in their blood and may need more acidic foods including consuming apple cider vinegar, saturated fatty acids from butter, bacon and eggs, or meat rather than a more alkalizing diet with fruits and vegetables. Many cancer patients need more pro-oxidant therapy with ozone/hydrogen peroxide therapy and minimum anti-oxidant supplements. The Ketogenic Diet which promotes acids and pro-oxidants might be better than an alkalizing diet for many chronic fatigue and cancer patients.

Professor Randolph Howes, MD, Ph.D. gave a lecture titled, *Oxidation and Mitochondrial Function: Antioxidant Snake Oil*, at ACAM (American College of Advanced Medicine) in 2013. He discussed the danger of over consuming anti-oxidant supplements, especially fat soluble anti-oxidants from beta carotene and vitamin E. He is a researcher, prolific writer, and wrote many books including, *Danger of Excessive Antioxidants in Cancer Patients* and *U.T.O.P.I.A. (Unified Theory of Oxygen Participation in Aerobiosis)*.

He proposed that cancer is allowed to occur due to a deficient microenvironment of EMOD (electronically modified oxygen derivatives), aka, free radical oxygen species production. He said excessive consumption of antioxidants may do more harm to chronic fatigue and cancer patients.

High dose Vitamin C IV infusion has a dual role as an antioxidant plus pro-oxidants at the cellular level (paradox of diametrical effects, fancy words for Yin/Yang effects). It may also enhance chemotherapy while simultaneously exhibiting a protective role from chemotherapy. Linus Pauling, champion of vitamin C and two times Nobel Prize winner, ingested up to 25 grams of vitamin C daily and, allegedly, died of cancer at age 92. Is this the paradox of diametrical effects of vitamin C?

Are you still with me? I hope I am not confusing you with the miracle of an alkaline diet for pH acid/base balance and the miracle of antioxidant supplementations hype because nature operates in Yin/Yang effects. There is no perfect answer to how much you need when there are constant fluctuations of paradox of the diametrical effects.

The St. Louis Post Dispatch covered the vitamin C controversy on February 6, 2014 in their health section, as it was originally covered by the Los Angeles Times. Dr. Jean Drisko, MD, director of integrative medicine at the University of Kansas Medical Center, published that intravenous high dose vitamin C therapy boosted chemotherapy when high concentrations of vitamin C entered the spaces between cells and formed hydrogen peroxide. Hydrogen peroxide in the cell damages cancer cells DNA, stresses their metabolism, and inhibits their growth. It improved the effectiveness of traditional chemotherapy agents like carboplatin and paclitaxel.

How much you need for antioxidant/pro-oxidants or acid/base balance with an acid/alkaline forming diet is still an educated guess. By measuring the pH, redox potential, and resistivity of blood, saliva and urine (the basis of the biological terrain assessment), the paradox of the diametrical effects can be monitored. For more information, you may read my short article on Biological Terrain on my web site.

I believe Dr. Howes is warning us about some of the danger of excessive use of fat soluble antioxidants, especially from beta carotene and vitamin E, when blind faith is used. We need to take his advice seriously. Treat patients based on their biochemical, metabolic, and biological individuality. Antioxidant supplements are not for everyone.

Dr. Simon Yu, M.D. is a Board Certified Internist. He practices Internal Medicine with an emphasis on Alternative Medicine to use the best each has to offer. For more articles on alternative medicine as well as patient success stories, and Dr. Yu's revolutionary health book, *Accidental Cure: Extraordinary Medicine for Extraordinary Patients*, visit his website at www.PreventionAndHealing.com or call Prevention and Healing, Inc., 314-432-7802. You can also attend a free monthly presentation and

discussion by Dr. Yu on Alternative Medicine at his office on the second Tuesday each month at 6:30 pm. Call to verify the date. Seating is limited, arrive early.

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