

Protein Priorities: Here's what you really need to know to reduce cancer risk

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Presented by:



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About Sharsheret

Sharsheret, Hebrew for “chain”, is an international non-profit organization, that improves the lives of Jewish women and families living with, or at increased genetic risk for, breast or ovarian cancer through personalized support and saves lives through educational outreach.

With regional offices in the Midwest, Northeast, Southeast, West, and Israel, Sharsheret serves 275,000 women, families, health care professionals, community leaders, and students. Sharsheret creates a safe community for women facing breast cancer and ovarian cancer and their families at every stage of life and at every stage of cancer - from before diagnosis, during treatment and into the survivorship years. While our expertise is focused on young women and Jewish families, approximately 25% of those we serve are not Jewish. All Sharsheret programs serve all women and men.

As a premier organization for psychosocial support, Sharsheret works closely with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and participates in psychosocial research studies and evaluations with major cancer centers, including Georgetown University Lombardi Comprehensive Cancer Center. Sharsheret is accredited by the Better Business Bureau and has earned a 4-star rating from Charity Navigator for four consecutive years.

Sharsheret offers the following national programs:

The Link Program

Peer Support Network, connecting women newly diagnosed or at high risk of developing breast cancer one-on-one with others who share similar diagnoses and experiences

- Embrace™, supporting women living with advanced breast cancer
- Genetics for Life®, addressing hereditary breast and ovarian cancer
- Thriving Again®, providing individualized support, education, and survivorship plans for young breast cancer survivors
- Busy Box®, for young parents facing breast cancer
- Best Face Forward®, addressing the cosmetic side effects of treatment
- Family Focus®, providing resources and support for caregivers and family members
- Ovarian Cancer Program, tailored resources and support for young Jewish women and families facing ovarian cancer
- Sharsheret Supports™, developing local support groups and programs

Education and Outreach Programs

- Health Care Symposia, on issues unique to younger women facing breast cancer
- Sharsheret on Campus, outreach and education to students on campus
- Sharsheret Educational Resource Booklet Series, culturally-relevant publications for Jewish women and their families and healthcare Professionals

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Jenna Fields: Welcome, everybody. Thank you so much for being here. You're joining today's webinar, Protein Priorities: Here's What You Need to Know to Reduce Your Cancer Risk. I'm so excited to have Rachel Beller, CEO of Beller Nutritional Institute, joining us today. And I'm Jenna Fields, chief regional officer of Sharsheret. Melanie, I'm going to ask you to take this slide down as people are coming in now. Today is part of our Sharsheret Summit, which brings together thousands of people for virtual and in-person education all across the country. We have just a few more days left of Sharsheret Summit, which ends this Friday, October 31st. Please visit our Sharsheret Summit webpage to learn more and to sign up for any of our upcoming webinars that feature top experts in the field. And my colleague is putting that link in the chat now so you can see what's coming up.

We are so grateful to our Sharsheret Summit sponsors, Merck, AstraZeneca, Novartis, Pfizer, Lilly, Daiichi Sankyo, City of Hope, Eisai, and GSK. And before we begin, just a few housekeeping items. Today's webinar is being recorded and will be posted on Sharsheret's website along with a transcript. But your faces and names will not be in the recording. If you would like to remain private, you have the option to turn off your video and rename yourself, or you can call into the webinar. And we also have closed captioning. To display those live captions, just click on the bottom bar, click on captions, and then click on show captions. You may have noticed that you were muted upon entering the Zoom, so please stay muted during the call. And please note that our Q&A session will focus exclusively on pre-submitted questions today to ensure we address the widest range of inquiries possible.

So we will not be taking questions from the chat for this webinar. And we do appreciate your understanding on that. We want to remind you that Sharsheret is a not-for-profit cancer support and education organization, and does not provide any medical advice or perform any medical procedures. Our full medical disclaimer is also in the chat now. Now, for Sharsheret Summit, two exciting webinars that I do want to let you know about that are coming up this week. One is tomorrow at 8:00 PM Eastern, and it's on managing side effects for breast cancer and ovarian cancer through treatment and survivorship. And we have two incredible experts from City of Hope. I hope you'll join us. And then Thursday, October 30th, at 8 PM Eastern, we're closing out Sharsheret Summit with renowned cancer experts, Dr. Elisa Port of Mount Sinai Health System, and Dr. Thomas Buchholz of Scripps Cancer Center.

And they'll be unpacking breast cancer, understanding stages, common types, and rare forms. And that's great for anyone who just wants to get a really good understanding of breast cancer 101. And both links to those webinars are going to be put in the chat so you can register right now to participate tomorrow and Thursday. And then if you're looking for more information on nutrition, and wellness, following today's webinar, I do want to direct you to our Sharsheret Thriving Again kit and webpage, which includes a free survivorship kit, and nutrition, wellness, exercise, and healthy living resources. And we're putting that in the chat as well. So lots of great resources for you. And really just want

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to sum up by saying that Sharsheret is here for you. If you're new to us, we do provide emotional support, mental health counseling, and other programs designed to help navigate you through your cancer experience. All of our support is free and confidential. And please, don't hesitate to reach out if you're looking for support. Now, before welcoming Rachel, I am so excited to welcome Sterling, who was a participant in the Rachel Beller Masterclass through Sharsheret. And we want to thank you, Sterling, for sharing your story today. So, welcome.

Sterling:

Thank you. I'm Sterling. I was diagnosed with hormone-positive, HER2-negative, stage IIB breast cancer in 2023 when I was 38 years old. I've since been in remission since April 2024. Knowing that I have an Ashkenazi background, I did genetic counseling, which had confirmed that I had a CHEK2 and a BRCA2 mutation. So my plan was to have a prophylactic double mastectomy after weaning my second child. But I immediately started early and often screenings, switching between mammograms and MRIs every six months. Shortly before I would've had my preventative surgery, my husband was diagnosed with brain cancer and passed away. So I was not able to have the preventative surgery, but I continued with my screenings every six months. Six months after his passing, I had clear imaging. A year after his passing, through imaging and biopsies, it was confirmed that I had breast cancer, and it was already in one of my lymph nodes.

So I do want to just highlight the importance of both the genetic counseling and early and often screenings, as well as not missing any screenings. Because I went from zero to 60 in six months. Having been the caretaker for my husband, I had some familiarity with nutrition as it related to cancer. However, after his passing, just being a single mom, working, having two toddlers, getting my own diagnosis, having chemo radiation, surgeries, more chemo, and now two additional treatments to reduce my recurrence risk, I was just fully burnt out. So I was making healthy choices, but definitely not balanced choices. There was very little variety in what I was eating. And it felt like I needed to be a Michelin-starred chef to add variety into it. So I was lucky enough to participate in one of Rachel's classes. And truly, thank goodness, I did. I just needed that reminder that you can have a diet full of variety and balanced macros, and it is attainable but also sustainable.

The sessions broke things down into bite-sized... No pun intended, bite-sized pieces. So I didn't feel like I was stuck having to sift through research, huge cookbooks, make grocery lists that would inevitably get lost or unused. And I know we all have different goals, whether it's increased energy or decreased side effects, but I found that the education that Rachel provided me with, I was really able to keep it flexible to my lifestyle, my goals around my journey. And I appreciate that everything was science and data-based because there's so much fear-mongering out there right now and misinformation on nutrition, especially as it relates to cancer, chronic illness. So it was just nice to have a source that I could trust through all of it. And then, also, I'm lucky I don't have picky eaters at

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home, so I'm lucky with that. But the best part of it is everything I've learned has worked with everyone in my family. So two small children are fully on board.

So I want to say thank you for the opportunity that I had last year to take the masterclass, and then also just to share my story. So thank you, everyone.

Jenna Fields: Thank you, Sterling. It makes a huge difference to have a personal story to share, and we're so grateful that you opened with us tonight.

Sterling: Thank you.

Jenna Fields: And we're glad that masterclass was so successful for you.

Sterling: Thanks.

Jenna Fields: It's now my pleasure to introduce Rachel Beller, MS RDN, CEO of Beller Nutritional Institute. She's a celebrity cancer, nutrition and weight management expert, and I am probably her biggest fan. So I'm so excited that you're here today, Rachel. She's the creator of the Beller Method, a four-time best-selling author, creator of award-winning power, spicing, nutrition blends, and a spokesperson for the American Cancer Society. She sits on several medical advisory boards, including Sharsheret, Cancer Support Community, JK Livin, and founded the Beller Community Outreach Program. She's conducted research on the role of nutrition in breast cancer prevention at Cedars-Sinai and John Wayne Cancer Institute at Providence St. John's Health Center here in LA. And she's worked with Matthew and Camila McConaughy, Laura Dern, Sheryl Crow. And she's the go-to nutritionist for Good Morning America, the Today Show, and more. Her mission is to translate nutritional science into simple, sustainable action plans. Through her masterclass, she guides members step-by-step, helping them gain the clarity and confidence they deserve to forever change the way they think about the power of scientific nutrition made easy. And now it is my pleasure to introduce Rachel Beller.

Rachel Beller: Thank you so much, Jenna. I really appreciate the introduction. And it is such an honor to be here with you guys. And my hope is to empower you and educate you about protein priorities. And yeah, I'm excited. Let's get started. I'm going to share my screen. And Sterling, I do want to say that I so appreciate your personal story and your willingness to open up and share this with us. So it was very meaningful on every front. So Jenna, let me know if you can see everything clearly here. Yeah.

Jenna Fields: Yes, perfect.

Rachel Beller: Great. All right. So I am going to speak about protein priorities. I have to say this is such a common question that I get asked about all the time. So I figured I would share this today as the Bella Nutrition Institute's Community Outreach Program. So to start off, what I'd like to share is what many people do as... What

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I consider the number one mistake when it comes to starting your nutrition journey. So I'm going to talk a little bit about that because I think it's really, really important to think about how we approach nutrition when we start to think about it. Sorry, my... There we go. The mistake that people make is that they start at the leaves and not at the roots. What do I mean by the leaves is that they start up here? You see, up here, there's all these different leaves.

Imagine them being different colors. It's very crowded up here. And the leaves, when it comes to nutrition, basically means they're starting with supplemental products. We all scroll through Instagram, and we look at different products that we see online. And what we're noticing... I'm having some technical issues with my images here. Is that we're starting at the leaves, and really, where we need to start is at the roots right here. So what I do is I take my patients and my masterclass participants through a journey where we start at the roots, the anti-cancer morning routine. It should take at least a week to get through that. Once you're ready, then you move on to step two, which is your daily meals blueprint. And then give that a chance. And then you're ready to phase in what we call step three, which is your snacks for sustainable energy.

Then your power tonics, because what we drink throughout the day does make a difference when it comes to our long-term health. Then we get to the fun part, which is the autopilot routine. And you want to say to yourself, can I take this nutritional system anywhere I go? Can I take it on vacation? Can I take it to a function? How do I eat out with it? It should become easy. It's liberating. It's fun to be able to have this knowledge, have that sense of mindfulness and empowerment. And at that point, the leaves become so easy. All those supplemental products that we actually do recommend, whether it's black cumin seeds, tart cherry juice, all kinds of fun things, you'll know if they have a role, if you should consider them or not. But until you start this foundational process over here, I have to say it's almost meaningless because it becomes something that you are just jumping on and jumping off.

And with nutrition, it's all about a cumulative effect over time that truly has been shown to make a difference when it comes to our survivorship. That's where it's at. It's not about a particular food or a few supplemental foods. It's really about a whole system that you can repeat over time. So today, I'm going to cover one piece of a very large, very simple puzzle, and that is protein priorities. A little bit about the science of how to select premium proteins. And again, it is as we move up the tree, this is one piece of step two. Sorry, my images are not popping up here, which is not fun for me. I had great pictures for you guys. I'm not sure why. Okay. So basically, what you would see here is some images of individuals who are very confused. They're wondering, should I be plant-based, should I include some fish, dairy, animal proteins?

People ask me all the time, "Rachel, what should I do? What is the best option for me when it comes to my nutrition?" The number one question that I get asked all the time. So what I've decided to do is categorize this into three different categories. One is going to be what I consider the lower return

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proteins, and that's going to be your organic meat, dairy, poultry, and eggs. Number two is going to be what I consider moderate return proteins. And that's going to be your fish, omega-3, low mercury fish. And number three, premium protein is going to be your plant-based protein. So let's unpack some of this a little bit and review category number one, which is the low return organic meat, poultry, and eggs. And so there's a lot of evidence. And I purposely left this kind of bare because I could literally talk about this for a few hours.

There are lots of studies that are pointing us in the direction that being more inclusive of plant-based proteins is beneficial. There's just a few studies here. You see a 15% lower risk of breast cancer risk with women who subbed servings of legumes for a meat per day. Or you've got here another study that looked at meat intake and an increased risk of breast cancer by a certain percentage. Again, these are just a few examples. We have lots of evidence out there. And you know what, it doesn't need to be 100% conclusive. This is strongly suggestive.

So I'm going to give you five reasons to reduce meat and poultry. So number one, they contain naturally occurring hormones. There's no bypassing that. And I'll unpack that. Number two, they're high in saturated fats. Number three, they disrupt our gut microbiome, what's known as dysbiosis. They could potentially stimulate insulin growth factor 1. And they can also form carcinogenic compounds when cooked at high temperatures. So let's talk about number one. Animal proteins contain hormones. So even if they're organic, they, by nature; have naturally occurring hormones. The real question that's circulating out there is, could those hormones contribute to our estrogenic loads, our estrogen exposure? And that really is the key question. Do we have a concrete answer about how much they impact? Probably not. Not yet. But here's the logic here. We're trying to study the impact of these hormones. And so what they've done... And there's a few studies. I'm just going to share something here.

What they've done is try to figure out if it does contribute to our estrogenic load. But women, basically, our estrogen is variable because we menstruate, or maybe... There's just a lot of different inconsistencies. So what they've decided here, what they dubbed as the milk studies, is look at men and children because their baseline estrogen levels are low and pretty stable compared to women. And what they found is after they drank milk, their dietary hormones, their estrogen levels rose. So that suggested that dietary hormones in milk can be absorbed by the body. So it's something worth noting. It's something for us to think about it. And also, we do seem to think about xenoestrogens that come from plastics and things that we put on our body. And similar to that concept, we're thinking about what we're putting in our body, and that's where we start to think about animal-based proteins and their potential contribution to our estrogenic load to some degree.

To some degree. So there's also studies looking at women who eat mostly plant-based proteins and very little meat, and they typically seem to have lower estrogen levels. So all in all, while the research is still emerging, and despite it

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not being 100% conclusive, it is recommended to limit or nearly eliminate animal-based proteins as much as possible. Just kind of something I don't want us to ignore, I guess, I would say. Saturated fats and cholesterol, and their impact on breast, ovarian, and prostate cancer. This is also very interesting. So animal proteins have saturated fats, and that contributes to our cholesterol levels, right? And excess cholesterol can be converted into a compound known as 27-hydroxycholesterol. And 27-hydroxycholesterol seems to mimic estrogen in the body. So that could have an association with an increased risk of hormonally related cancers such as ovarian, breast, and prostate cancer. Again, interesting stuff for us to think about.

And number three is that animal proteins can promote dysbiosis. Dysbiosis is basically an abnormal bacterial balance in the gut. Now, when we eat a diet that's rich in animal-based proteins, particularly meat, for example, dairy, they seem to be high in saturated fat. Now, a diet high in saturated fat encourages the body to produce some bile acids, okay, and that promotes dysbiosis, that abnormal bacteria in the gut. Now, what that does is that encourages the body to produce beta-glucuronidase. And beta-glucuronidase is an enzyme that can reactivate estrogen in the gut and potentially raise cancer risk. So here, what you're not seeing unfortunately... I do apologize for that. Is you would see a graphic that shows you how this takes place in the body. How the beta-glucuronidase actually encourages the excess estrogen to get recycled back into the blood system. And right here, we are basically showing that plant-based proteins, when you're eating a lot of plant-based proteins, you're naturally eating more fiber, and your saturated fat intake is reduced, and that's great, that reduces inflammation in the body.

But all in all, what that does is that it decreases bile acid production, and that basically helps shuttle excess estrogen out of the body. So you're producing less beta-glucuronidase, and as a result of that, more of the excess hormones get shuttled out of the body, which is incredible. This is another very interesting topic. You're going to be hearing a lot about IGF-1 levels. So IGF-1 is basically insulin growth factor 1, and that's a hormone that signals for our cells to grow and multiply, which is not something that we really want. Now, all in all, what I'm showing you here is... Basically, what we're looking at is whether the type of protein that we ingest makes a difference when it comes to insulin growth factor. The body's production of insulin growth factor. Okay. So there's a study out of Oxford, and there's other studies as well. But all in all, basically, what this showed is that the source of the protein may matter.

So, for example, if you have two groups of individuals, one ingested 90 grams of protein from plant-based proteins and the other from animal-based proteins, what it showed is that those who ingested animal proteins had increased levels of this insulin growth factor 1. Whereas those who ate the same amount of protein from plant-based had a decreased amount of IGF-1. The body was producing less. Why is that? We think that it's potentially due to the amino acid profiles in these proteins. Particularly leucine and methionine, they probably are encouraging the body to produce... The liver to produce more insulin growth

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factor 1. Again, interesting stuff to note. It's very important for us to think about modulating and balancing these insulin growth factor levels. There's nothing we can do to control it 100%, but these are definitely things that we want to think about when it comes to selecting our proteins. Number five, animal proteins can produce carcinogenic chemicals. So how we prepare our food does matter when it comes to producing what's called HCAs, heterocyclic amines, and PAHs. And when you cook meats and different proteins at high temperatures, what that does is it produces these potentially carcinogenic chemicals.

So this is something that we do want to think about when we go out to eat and we order chicken or meat, we don't know what kind of temperatures they're using. And again, it just lends to the general concept of reducing our intake. And this is something that we think about. Now, a lot of people ask me, "Rachel, is there anything we can do to reduce this?" And, yes, there are ways to do this. You could cook the meat a little bit in advance, and then put it on the grill so there's less charring. You can also marinate your meat in something like an acid that has vinegar, or lemon juice, garlic. There are different spices that help reduce the formation of these HCAs. So there are things that you can do to reduce. But again, mostly just sharing a few things when it comes to animal-based proteins, and some things for us to consider. Nothing to fear, but something to consider. And also, processed meats are strongly linked to increased cancer risks. So that's something else to think about as well.

All right. Now I'm going to shift gears to category number two, and that is fish, which we consider the moderate return proteins. And why do I consider them moderate return proteins? Well, let's talk about the trade-offs. Number one, fish doesn't have any fiber whatsoever. It doesn't have any of those plant phytonutrients that protect us on the cellular level. So that's something to think about as well. They do contain naturally occurring hormones. Although I've seen research out there that's suggesting that it has perhaps less of this amino acid profile that would impact insulin growth factor 1. So could be a benefit there compared to meat. And it's also rich in these omega-3 fatty acids that are so important when it comes to reducing body inflammation. That's really, really important. So let's talk about these omega-3s.

So when it comes to omega-3s, they're not all created equal, right? So when it comes to plant-based proteins or plant-based omega-3s, I should say, they have what's known as alpha-linoleic acid. Okay. And fish have what's called EPA and DHA. Now the omega-3s from fish, the body is able to absorb them with ease. They're great. They're ready for absorption. When it comes to plant-based omega-3s, alpha-linoleic acid, they need to go through a conversion process into EPA and DHA, but the body doesn't do such a good job converting it. Only 0.1 to 21% is converted into EPA and DHA. So there is an advantage there with the omega-3s that come from fish compared to plant-based sources. Plant-based sources are still an excellent option. Some people who are 100% vegan, they might consider supplementing with an algae supplement.

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But I do want to mention and highlight a benefit there, and that's where I'm considering some of these proteins as moderate return because there is something beneficial when it comes to the omega-3s that we're getting from fish. There are a lot of options out there when it comes to fish and low mercury options. I'm just highlighting a few here. And now I'm going to shift gears to category number three, which is our plant-based proteins. And I want to share with you why I consider them to be... Why I consider them to be a premium-based protein. So I'm going to give you a few good reasons. Okay. Number one, they're packed with cancer-fighting compounds, those plant phytonutrients that protect us on the cellular level. Very important. Very rich in that.

Number two, they're rich in fiber. I consider these proteins like double-duo proteins because they have a dual effect here. They're rich in fiber and rich in protein, which is fantastic. And when we ingest the right amounts of fiber, it encourages our body to remove excess hormones like cholesterol and estrogen out of the body. It supports our gut microbiome, which in turn supports our immune function. So very important stuff. Lots of benefits there. Plant-based proteins also boost satiety because of that dual effect. You've got fiber and you've got protein, and they're both working together like a tag team here, and helping you with your satiety levels, supporting your weight management, supporting your blood sugar modulation. I'm pretty excited about this stuff. I feel like I'm a car salesperson selling a car, and I'm so excited about all these safety features and all these great things that it has to offer.

So that's important. It's key. It's key for reducing hormonally-related cancers, but also all sorts of different cancers. Colon cancer, lots of different cancers. So that's important. Number four, they're naturally anti-inflammatory. What's not to love about that? They're lower in saturated fat, rich in antioxidants, and help reduce inflammation in the body. Last but not least, they support healthy, what we called, IGF-1 levels, insulin growth factor 1. They help us modulate that to the best that we can. Because we're seeing these differences when individuals are eating meat and foods that seem to encourage the liver to produce more insulin growth factor 1, and plant-based proteins seem to not do that as much. So that is helpful for us to think about, and it's very encouraging, I have to say.

Just a quick reminder of what we talked about earlier, which is why animal proteins may be less ideal. Again, number one, they contain these naturally occurring hormones. Even if they're organic, it's just by nature, they have hormones. They do have saturated fats. We talked about that and its impact on producing more 27-hydroxycholesterol, and also having an impact on inflammation in the body. They do encourage what's called dysbiosis and abnormal bacterial balance of the gut. They could potentially stimulate insulin growth factor 1 production. And they can form carcinogenic compounds when cooked at certain temperatures. And also processed meat. So there are things to think about here. A lot of my patients refer to some of these animal proteins as proteins that have more baggage, I guess, you could say.

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Lots of evidence out there. Again, I'm just putting a few things here. I'm not going to go into all the weeds and the details of this. But there are a lot of studies that support being more inclusive of plant-based proteins. Being more inclusive of them. And the method and what I'm talking about today does align with leading health organizations. The American Institute for Cancer Research recommends a primarily plant-based diet centered around vegetables, whole grains, and legumes. They're all hinting and telling us the same exact thing. Add more plants into your diet, add more plant-based proteins into your diet. Reduce animal-based proteins. Include more plant-based proteins. World Cancer Research Fund, the American Cancer Society. All roads are leading to encouraging us to include more of these protective proteins. And another thing that's great is that research also supports the fact that plant-based proteins are great for preventing other diseases like heart disease, diabetes, inflammatory diseases. So all in all, it's all good stuff, and it's something that is kind of fun to embrace.

So again, just as a review, number one, the low return proteins, what I consider low return are your organic meat, poultry, eggs, and dairy. The moderate returns are going to be fish. Specifically, I encourage you to seek out low mercury, high omega-3. Perhaps you want to pick up a low-mercury tinned fish, for example. Sardines are very, very, very low in mercury, high in omega-3 fats. And if you dare eat the ones that have the bones, they're very, very rich in calcium. And category number three is going to be what I consider the premium return proteins. Those are going to be your plant-based proteins.

So people ask, like, "What's a starting point? What's the best thing I can do, Rachel, to start? How do I approach this in a way that feels relaxed and not overwhelming?" And it's very important to think about how you start to think about this because the last thing I want you to do is think about what I presented. Mind you, it was a little choppy. I didn't have all my little images and things that I love to connect with on the screen. But still, I want you to take this information. And the last thing I want you to do is think, oh my God, I'm so overwhelmed. I can't do this. I need to become vegan. I need to change everything and everyone around me. No, that's the last thing I want you to do. The best place to start is to identify where you're at.

Here's an example. These are 14 meal opportunities in front of you. You've got seven lunches and seven dinners. Okay. 14. Out of the 14, I didn't include breakfast because that's one place where it's so easy for people to think about eating more plant-based breakfast. It's just easy to autopilot. So I took that out of the equation. Okay. So you have 14 opportunities here. Figure out where you're at. So, for example, this is a very common starting point for a lot of my patients. Right. They've already started to do some swap-outs. Say, for example, one lunch, instead of putting a grilled chicken on your salad, you swapped it out for one of our plant-based protein recommendations like spiced chickpeas, or edamame, or something on another day. Or here, maybe you had some kind of a protein-based pasta with your vegetables for your plant-based meal. That's a lot. So that's three meals. So this person right here is already at 20% plant-based

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proteins because they've opted to include three meals out of their week that's plant-based.

At that point, you might decide, you know what, I actually want to try to bump it up a little bit. My goal eventually is to get to... Most of my patients, for some reason, choose 85, 90%. Okay. The secret is not to go from this, from 20% to 90, the following week. It sounds great. It sounds smart. It sounds like something a lot of us want to do because we get all excited about it. But what I've found is that the best way to do it is with a phased approach. Think about the next week, maybe include one or two. Then you could tell yourself, wow, I'm at 40%, I barely even noticed. My life is the same. I didn't have to put in more work. I'm slowly phasing it in. I'm mindfully knowing that I'm doing this. And that feels really good. So that's one suggestion that I have. I could go on and on about this. But I did want to present this because I do find that a lot of people feel so overwhelmed because they feel like they really need to implement a lot at once. And what I found from my 20 years of practice is that it doesn't work. I'll never give anyone an entire agenda upfront. They want it, but I tell them, you don't want it that way. Because I've seen it fail literally.

So just as a review here, just as a reminder, we just covered one piece of step two, which is protein priorities. Just a little bit of the science, just to encourage you to be a little bit more inclusive and maybe change the way you think about how you approach your protein intake. And that's what we reviewed here. And just all in all, I do want to bring you back to that nutrition tree of life. And again, one of the best things you could do is start at the roots. Don't start here, start right here. Establish what your anti-cancer morning routine looks like. What are you eating? Are you diversifying fiber sources? What kind of proteins? All of those things come into play. And then gradually move on to your daily meals, how to build your plates for success. Lots of things there. But the secret is to keep it simple.

Level three, snacks. Level four, power tonics. Give yourself a chance to autopilot. And that is the best way to approach this. I've seen many people do this on their own. There's so much information out there. Take your time. Translate the nutritional science into something that's actionable and sustainable for your lifestyle. It's definitely doable. Just like some people decorate their own home, they just A to Z, they can handle picking everything out, putting it all together, and implementing that. Others need a little bit of a helping hand, which is something that we specialize in. And if you do need a helping hand, then we did open up a class just yesterday actually. And my team decided to offer something special until tomorrow. This is going to be a six-week journey, where I walk you through that four-step process, starting from the roots going to autopilot.

And the key thing... And I think that what lends to the success of it is the engagement. I hold weekly office hours where we can hang out and talk about how it's going, and implement changes. But honestly, I think the best thing is the simplicity. The simpler you keep this, the less disruptive it is for your

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lifestyle, the better it is. So if you do need that helping hand, we're there. But I appreciate this opportunity. And I'm so glad that I had a chance to share this with you guys. And Jenna, we can open it up to-

Jenna Fields: Yeah, thank you. Thank you, Rachel. There was so much information in there. I know it leaves us wanting more because there's just so much to unpack with this topic. So thank you for sharing your expertise with us. I know there were a few questions in the chat. We are committing to only taking our pre-submitted questions because there were so many questions that came in. However, this one was also in the chat, which is, does tofu and soy protein cause cancer? What's the current recommendation for soy?

Rachel Beller: Sure. So the research is very consistent these days in letting us know that soy is actually protective. It's protective. It has phytoestrogens, which are plant hormones that protect us on the cellular level. They actually act as decoys, and protecting us. And that's important to note. So it also supports what we talked about, IGF-1. It has fiber. Lots of protective compounds. We used to think, okay, that's... In the breast tissue, there's cells, right, and the cell has an alpha receptor and a beta receptor. Okay. And the alpha receptor is where normal natural estrogen would attach to. And that would promote growth. Okay. The phytoestrogen from soy attaches to the beta receptor, the other receptor on this side, for example, right? And what it does is that it acts as a blocker. It sends a signal to the alpha receptor saying, "Hey, I'm here, shut the door and actually go away." And that is very protective. So, soy is very protective when it comes to cancer risk reduction. Lots of good research. Especially after 2009.

Jenna Fields: Amazing. Rachel, how can one prioritize proper nutrition when they're currently undergoing chemo and can only eat plain carbs?

Rachel Beller: So I think when it comes to chemo, there are things that individuals crave. And a lot of my patients actually very hard on themselves for I'm only craving carbs, and it's not good. But I like to think of it and look at it with a different lens. Okay. So for example, if someone is craving oatmeal, for example, right, think about the type of oatmeal that you're having. Maybe upgrade it a little bit, and choose a sprouted rolled oat versus an instant, or a steel-cut oat. It's still going to have a similar flavor profile. It's the same texture. But it's a little bit upgraded. Same with bread. Instead of a whole wheat bread, maybe you're opting for a sprouted flourless bread. Same texture, but very, very different. They're worlds apart when it comes to our blood sugars and what they have to offer. And another thing you could do is think about how do I upgrade that oatmeal?

Maybe you're going to add some... For example, I have one patient who added some gelled chia seeds into the oatmeal. The taste profile didn't change at all, but it's more supportive. She knows that she's getting omega-3s, getting more fiber in her diet. She's tolerating it. It's working for her. And it's such a mindful thing to know that you're adding more good. You've upgraded that. So those carbohydrates, we seem to look at them like they're not very productive for us;

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they're not yielding a return for our health. But I look at it a little differently. I think it's what we choose, how mindful we are about it. And I think having that positive outlook when it comes to that, you are adding more good, you are eating foods that are supportive. And by the way, oats, for example... This was something that my patient was down on herself on. They're rich in beta-glucans.

Beta-glucans are these special prebiotic fibers that have direct access into our gut. And they feed the good bacteria in our gut. And when they do that, they produce what's known as short-chain fatty acids. And that in turn supports our immune function. It makes weight management easier. And that reduces inflammation. It's really, really important. So see, something that somebody didn't feel so positive about, right, we changed how we think about it. And it just offers so much good.

Jenna Fields: I know that we're running out of time, Rachel. I am cognizant of your time. I'm going to ask my colleague to put our evaluation for this webinar in the chat. And Rachel, if you could answer one last submitted question. Any top recommended vegetarian and vegan protein options for people?

Rachel Beller: Yeah. No, there's lots of them. So what's really popular right now are plant-based protein pastas, for example. Right. So there's edamame pasta that is really rich in protein. Very high in protein and fiber. Very easy to tolerate. There are chickpea pastas, all kinds of pastas like that, that you could use as a substitute. Chickpeas, lentils, different kinds. There's black beluga lentils, there's red lentils, there's tofu that's sprouted. Edamame, hemp hearts. And then there are a lot of protein boosters that people ought to use. And my key recommendation, if I may, is to recommend a protein booster that's least processed. A lot of people are on these plant protein powders, and they have all kinds of ingredients. And they think that the more it has, the better it is. And I think of it the exact opposite way. The less it has, the better it is.

So what I do is I like to recommend something. Like right now, we're into almond protein powder. And the reason I love it, it's a single ingredient. People are talking about lead and all that stuff. It's a tree. It's not from the ground. And it's very neutral-tasting as well. So it's something that is so easy to integrate into a variety of foods. It's just almonds. There's nothing to it. It's not heavily processed. They basically press the almonds, dry them, and then it's ground up. Not like almond flour. But it's something that has been a game-changer. It's so easy. One thing that a lot of people like to do during treatment is drink a lot of protein drinks, right, that are so easy and accessible. So that's something you can use if you want to upgrade that and bypass all the additives.

You can take something like an organic unsweetened soy milk that is already rich. It's going to have about 12 grams of protein. You can add a little bit of this almond protein powder in there, single ingredient. You're going to zhuzh it up, mix it with one of those hand frothers that is as easy to clean as running some water over a teaspoon. And you've got 20-some-odd grams of protein. It took two seconds to put together. Minimal cleanup. So my point in sharing that is

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that you want to include some very easy things into your routine. Things that are easy are going to be sustainable. Don't overwhelm yourself. Even plant-based proteins added. I know that was one of the questions that we had also. The whole family doesn't need to change. What you're going to do is maybe add a plant-based protein like spiced chickpeas. That's one, two, three.

You take some avocado oil, chickpeas, and one spice blend, right, and you pop it in the oven, you put it on a table, and everybody looks at it as like something that you added to the table. Right. But you're going to change how you think. And you say, you know what, I'm going to take a portion, about 3/4 to a cup, would be a plant-based protein portion. And I'll add that to my plate. Or maybe I'll initiate a split. Maybe two ounces of chicken and 1/2 a cup, and I'm slowly integrating this. No one's noticing; the effort is minimal. And I really think that that's the best way to go. So I do want to point that out is that the simplicity, literally so, so simple, is the best way to initiate and to translate nutritional science into an easy solution. Really take that easy solution because nutrition is very simple if we really think about it.

Jenna Fields:

Wow. Rachel, thank you so much for all of this. I know that we're out of time. And if you have any outstanding questions, please reach out to your Sharsheret social worker, who does have additional resources for you on nutrition. We do want to continue the conversation. And we'll share your masterclass information as well, Rachel, after the webinar. Please take a moment to fill out the evaluation, which my colleague put in the chat. It helps us improve and expand our programming. And thank you, Sterling, again for sharing your personal story with us. We're so grateful to you for inspiring us all today. And we're grateful to our Sharsheret Summit sponsors, Merck, AstraZeneca. For some reason, my notes are being put into the screen. But Merck, AstraZeneca, Novartis, Pfizer, Lilly, Daiichi Sankyo, City of Hope, Eisai, and GSK. We're so grateful to our sponsor support. Please remember that Sharsheret is here for you. Please feel free to reach out to us with any questions. And thank you again for everyone joining us today.