

Dr. Max Gerson Therapy For Cancer

How It Works

Gerson therapy is one of the metabolic therapies, using a special diet, plus supplements, and a coffee enema to cure terminal cases of cancer. 90-95% of his cancer cases were far advanced (terminal), and overall his cure rate was about 50%, which for his day was quite exceptional among alternative practitioners. This percentage is far higher than current day orthodox treatments!!

He stated: "... this percentage could be higher if there were better cooperation from the family physician, the patient himself and less resistance from the family against such a strict regime." (page 33) Apparently some things never change. Gerson is also known for his very high cure rate of tuberculosis, which is caused by a bacteria.

Having said that, there is a reason that Gerson's cure rate might actually be closer to those of Kelley and Binzel, as examples, than surface statistics might imply. Both Kelley and Binzel did not include in their statistics those cancer patients who came to them who were simply too far gone to help. Gerson apparently included everyone.

Dr. Max Gerson Therapy

Max Gerson was a medical doctor who used diet and other natural treatments to deal with cancer. His approach was developed as a combination of trial-and-error methods and a vast amount of reading of the scientific literature.

The theory and implementation of his treatment can be found in his book: *A Cancer Therapy - Results of Fifty Cases and The Cure of Advanced Cancer by Diet Therapy*. This article will be based on the 5th Edition. His book is quite long and at times very technical. Nevertheless, it is recommended reading, especially for those using his treatment. A medical dictionary sitting by your side will be very helpful.

Gerson was well aware of soil issues, the electricity of cells, how cancer cells ferment glucose, oxidizing enzymes, sodium/potassium balance, connective tissue, and many other technical issues related to cancer. His treatment and approach was a "whole body" approach, meaning he did not consider that treating only the localized area of concentrated cancer cells, as orthodox medicine does, is a good idea.

"The ideal task of cancer therapy is to restore the function of the oxidizing systems in the entire organism. This, of course, is difficult to accomplish. It involves the following: 1) detoxification of the whole body, 2) providing the essential mineral contents of the potassium group, 3) adding oxidizing enzymes continuously as long as they are not reactivated and built in the body (in the form of green leaf juice and fresh calf's liver juice). This will create a near normal condition of the oxidizing system in the body, to which malignant cells with the fermentation system cannot adapt."

Dr. Max Gerson, *A Cancer Therapy*, 5th Edition, page 7

Gerson was very interested in treating the liver. Several chapters of his book deal with various aspects of the liver. He noted several cancer patients who were cured of their cancer but later died of cirrhosis of the liver (see page 18). In a sense he considered that damage to the liver preceded the metastasis of cancer (see pages 40 and 64). In fact, Gerson saw a parallel between the deterioration of the liver and the growth and progression of the cancer!! Because of his concern for liver problems, he did not favor fasting (see page 74).

One point of focus of Gerson's interest was connective tissue. Quoting Professor Pischinger:

"The mesenchym [currently spelled: mesenchyme] consists mostly of connective tissue cells which are distributed all over the body, especially between all organs and tissues. It contains some different types

of cells. This tissue was long ignored until a few scientists discovered the importance of this so-called 'filling tissue,' now characterized more precisely as the 'reticular system,' containing the mesenchymal defense and parenteral digestive apparatus. From the pathology we learn that almost every tumor is surrounded by such tissue, and the same tissue also embraces all new cancer establishments. This connective tissue is almost inactive and paralyzed in cancer, incapable of helping or protecting the body any longer in defense or healing."

Dr. Max Gerson, A Cancer Therapy, 5th Edition, page 120

Gerson comments about this quote:

"A number of scientists have tried various methods to stimulate the reticular system as well as the reticulo-endothelial system, which seem to control and regulate the growth of cells. Failure of these systems may cause the uncontrolled growth [of cancer cells], which is a characteristic part of cancer."

Dr. Max Gerson, A Cancer Therapy, 5th Edition, page 120

It is unfortunate that Gerson did not know what we know now:

"Cancer cells produce and secrete millions of enzyme molecules, which, like scissors, cut collagen and tissue that surrounds cells... Using the same mechanism, cancer cells can settle [in a new location] and start new tumor growth.

Dr. Aleksandra Niedzwiecki, Rath Foundation

It is the focus of the Rath Cellular Solution and Osiecki Cancer Technique (for which I have articles on this web site) to protect this collagen matrix from being cut apart by the cancer cell created enzymes. If Gerson had had this technology, his cure rate may have been significantly higher.

A related, and just as interesting, concept in his book is related to the issue of inflammation. To him, the body's ability to create an inflammation to the afflicted area of the body was critical to the treatment of cancer. "...that slices of tissue, taken from malignant rat tumors or human cancer tissues, are killed fast in an inflammation exudate simply because the specific metabolism of the cancer cell cannot be maintained in those surroundings." (page 43) "There is no other way but to kill these [cancer] cells to dissolve and absorb them. I believe the surest way to achieve this end is to restore to the body its ability to produce non-bacterial inflammatory reactions." (pages 125-127)

In addition to this, he felt the diet should be designed to avoid allergic reactions. "It became necessary to find means of excluding all allergic reactions as far as possible. We succeeded in excluding the nutritional allergies by adding large doses of potassium and simultaneously applying a strictly saltless diet." (page 139) Coffee enemas and castor oil treatments were also part of this approach.

"[Professor G. von Bergmann stated] Cancer metabolism takes place once the body is no longer capable of producing an active 'inflammation metabolism' ... the cancerous organism is anergic [a lack of normal immunological function] in respect to inflammation."

Dr. Max Gerson, A Cancer Therapy, 5th Edition, page 120

I am not sure whether Gerson included this next quote in reference to inflammation or the more general topic of temperature: "[Professor Lambert concluded] In the tissue culture the cancer cell will be damaged by a temperature of 39 degrees C. and dies at 42 degrees C; the normal cell will be damaged by 43 degree C. and dies at 46-47 degrees C." (page 45)

It seems that the collagen matrix (a critical part of the connective tissue, and which Gerson refers to as mesenchym), the immunity system, and the ability of the body to create inflammations are all highly related issues.

"Connective tissue functions not only as a mechanical support for other tissues but also as an avenue for communication and transport among other tissues. Most significantly, connective tissue is the stage

for inflammation. The principal cell types involved in immunological defense are found within connective tissue."

<http://www.siumed.edu/~dking2/intro/ct.htm>

It may be correct to conclude that when the cancer cell enzymes cut apart the collagen matrix, not only does the cancer spread, but the immunity system and the ability of the body to create an inflammation are damaged. In other words, as was said above: "This connective tissue is almost inactive and paralyzed in cancer, incapable of helping or protecting the body any longer in defense or healing."

Gerson was very interested in the potassium group of minerals versus the sodium group. He favored the potassium group for treating cancer and his diet absolutely forbid adding any salt to foods. The ratio of potassium to sodium was something he emphasized several times. This, in spite of the fact that some of his contemporaries came to a different conclusion about salt. He probably talked about potassium more than any other single subject. He was also interested in other minerals as well, along with some vitamins.

Gerson was also aware of the electrical component of cancer. "All investigators found that malignant tumors are characterized by a considerable electronegativity in the tissues and fluids." (page 106) In fact, this is one reason why he was so interested in potassium and other minerals. "The late G.W. Crile, and his collaborators, M. Telkes and A.F. Rowland, found a decreased electrical polarization and an increased electric conductivity in malignant tumors which may be caused, in my opinion, by the greater sodium content in the growing part of the tumor." (page 107)

One vitamin Gerson liked was niacin. It "helps to bring back sufficient glycogen into the liver cells," (page 209) open[s] the small arteries and capillaries;" (page 209) and "raises the electrical potentials in the cells." (page 209) He also recommended discontinuing taking niacin in cases of bleeding. (page 209)

As with Moerman, Gerson was very interested in iodine, a nutrient our FDA has made difficult to obtain in therapeutic quantities. "Iodine is a decisive factor in the normal differentiation of cells, and can be used in order to counteract the decrease of cell differentiation as seen in the cancerous tissues. Iodine is also regarded as counteracting some adrenal hormones." (page 32)

As with several other alternative health practitioners (e.g. Kelley, Hulda Clark, etc.) Gerson required a coffee enema. Generally, his enemas were given every four hours - day and night. However, in cases of discomfort (i.e. flare-ups), they were given every two hours! As he notes on page 236a: "However, physician must monitor serum electrolytes frequently."

Gerson had excellent results treating tuberculosis cases. The significance of this is that tuberculosis is caused by a bacteria. His first cancer treatments were essentially his tuberculosis treatment plan (see page 31). This lends credibility to the theory that cancer is related to some type of parasite, felt now to be a fungi/mould/yeast. Gerson himself discounted the possibility that cancer was caused by a microorganism (see page 35).

Gerson was also well aware, even in the 1950s, of the importance of organic foods (because general farming practices left the plants without enough nutrients), such as carrots, and the damage done to foods by the way they were processed and packaged. Think how much worse things are today!!

Gerson twice mentioned that his "most drastic" mistake was giving a number of patients "opposite sex hormones," based on the recommendation of another doctor. This mistake caused a number of deaths among his better patients. (see page 219)

Gerson was not a fan of orthodox medicine. He noted that cure rates were the same even after better diagnostic techniques and a myriad of new orthodox treatment protocols (see page 87).

The Diet

The Gerson diet is extremely detailed. It is not just the foods that are included and excluded; it is when the foods are eaten, how often they are eaten, how they are prepared, how not to prepare them, what to cook them in, how to package them, etc. etc.

If someone is going to go on the Gerson diet, I would suggest that before they read the book, they write down (or become familiar with) the diet as presented in pages 236-248 (5th edition). Then as they read the book from the beginning they can compare the comments in the book with the diet itself.

One thing that must be remembered is that the book was written in pieces, meaning at more than one time. Dr. Gerson did not have a word processor, in which he could quickly make changes to old chapters. Thus, the book is a mix of old chapters and new chapters. There is a lot of redundancy and a lot of poor organization. But this is a reflection of the time period in which he wrote the book. It is a large book, and very technical at times.

I have seen testimonials of the Gerson treatment on the internet, however, details were not given of their treatment, except that they apparently drank more carrot juice than his book suggested.

Gerson kept his cancer patients on his diet for at least one and a half years, and frequently two years. "In more advanced cases it takes a long time, about one to one and a half years, to restore the liver as near as possible to normal." (page 196)

"Another frequent mistake patients make is to feel, that 'a little bit' of one or the other forbidden foods cannot do them much harm. This is an entirely mistaken notion; besides, these 'little bits' tend to become larger and more frequent: they do not fail to produce harmful results."

Dr. Max Gerson, A Cancer Therapy, 5th Edition, page 216

Well said, this still applies to cancer diets.

Supercharging This Treatment

My web site focuses on "major" treatments, meaning treatments that have a long history of having a profound effect on the success of the cancer treatment. An analysis of his treatment against this standard yields the conclusion that his treatment has the equivalent of one "major" treatment. This "major" treatment is derived from his combination of carrot juice and apple juice (which I give a one-half "major" treatment score) and his "greens," which I also give a one-half "major" treatment score.

In short, his treatment is fairly weak by today's standards, which would typically include more than half a dozen "major" treatments. Also, by today's standards, there are some errors in his diet, such as his exclusion of berries and pineapple. This is VERY understandable!! He was working before the discovery of phytonutrients, glyconutrients, and so on, thus he had little knowledge of modern nutrition.

In spite of that, if someone wants to go on his diet, I think that would be fine for a cancer patient. However, I would visit my article on evaluating alternative cancer treatments and add at least a half-dozen "major" treatments and/or immunity building treatments to his treatment! Examples would be to add the Rath Cellular Solution, Essiac Tea, etc. more info can be found [at: Checklist To Evaluate An Alternative Cancer Treatment Program .](#)

We give a fresh glass of juice every hour: five glasses of apple-carrot juice, three glasses of plain carrot juice and we give liver capsules with it, four glasses of juice from leafy type greens rich in chlorophyll, iron, nutrients, enzymes, everything the body has been lacking over the years.

We also give three full vegetarian meals and a fruit plate every day. By drinking the juice, you get an enormous flooding of nutrients, minerals, enzymes, and vitamins which start to flush out the kidneys.

The nutrients go into the tissues, into the cells and force out the poisons, and all those poisons are released into the blood stream. The liver filters them out. You have to help the liver get rid of them, and there is only one way - by opening the bile ducts", and Dr. Gerson did this with the famous and much joked about coffee enemas which is the key to successful treatment.

Gerson Therapy: Excess protein in the diet is carcinogenic

Excess protein causes cancer. Especially when it is cooked. Doctors and nutritionists advise you that animal protein is needed for strength and tissue repair, but that is absolutely the worst advice you can get. Researchers at the Karolinska Institute in Sweden found that when any kind of flesh including red meat, poultry, pork and lamb was heated to 212 degrees, whether it was boiled, broiled, fried or baked, the protein in the meat CHANGED into toxic amides that do nothing in your body except provide you with carcinogens.

Cooked meat is strictly a carcinogen. Now if you like meat for the taste, that is a different story, I won't argue about tastes. The latest research done at the University of California at Irvine, showed that children who eat as few as three hotdogs a week had 10 to 12 times higher incidence of leukemia and brain tumors. Sausages are perhaps the worst food. They are chemically treated, dyed and preserved. They have nitrates and nitrosamines.

Potassium versus sodium in the Gerson Therapy

Gerson found that sodium stimulates tumor growth. It interferes with body function. According to Gerson you need high potassium and low sodium, the same ratio which can be found in fresh live foods. All processed foods contain reduced potassium and raised sodium. Sodium is necessary for tumor growth. The Gerson Therapy supplements the body with potassium.

Liver regeneration and the Gerson Therapy

The liver is the most important organ in the body. It is the filtration system for detoxification. I have heard doctors say that if your liver functions up to 35%, you are all right, but when it drops below that, disease develops, whether it is diabetes, cancer, arthritis, lupus or anything else. By the time cancer or chronic disease develops, liver function is below 35%.

So when the tumor, the cancer, arthritis or other disease symptoms are gone, that doesn't mean the body is cured. The body isn't really restored until the liver goes back to its full activity of somewhere between 90 and 100%. We never really know how long it takes to get there, but we can estimate it takes at least 1 1/2 year or 2. If you go back to eating average food right away, the foods you used to eat, candies, ice cream, cheese and meat, the cancer will come back rather quickly because the liver is not able to deal with these things.

Flaxseed oil and the Gerson Therapy

Dr. Gerson found, after observing for a long time, that patients, especially with cancer and also with heart disease, atherosclerosis and so on cannot handle oils and fats, and that is why his book says no oils. Yet he was very much aware that the body needs a certain amount of essential fatty acids and that after deprivation for a year or year and a half, until the tumors disappear, there is a lack of essential fatty acids in the Gerson diet.

He searched and searched and tried every kind of oil he could think of, everything from olive oil, sesame oil, safflower oil to sunflower oil. None of them were usable because in each case the tumors would regrow. Fats stimulate tumor growth. But after the book came out, he came across the work of Dr. Johanna Budwig in Germany who showed that one may use flaxseed oil and that it is well tolerated by cancer patients. It helps to stimulate the immune system, and kills the tumor tissue. He used two tablespoons of flaxseed oil per day - one at lunch and one at dinner, and after a month on the therapy, he cut it down to one tablespoon a day. He advised against cooking with oils. You can't cook with flaxseed oil because if it is heated, it deteriorates and causes problems. So the flaxseed oil must only be used raw and cold.