

HEALTHY CONNECTIONS

EMPOWERING OUR COMMUNITY ONE "BODY" AT A TIME

Wellness Program of the African People's Education & Defense Fund, Inc. June 2006
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Breast Cancer Most Deadly for Black Women

Younger black women who get breast cancer are far more likely than other afflicted women to have a particularly aggressive and lethal form of the disease, a recent University of North Carolina study found.

Breast cancer is 60% deadlier in black women younger than 55 than it is in white women in the same age group. Breast cancer is less common for black women, but when it occurs, it seems to be more aggressive and harder to treat.

A quick-spreading form of breast cancer called the basal-like subtype appeared in 39 percent of premenopausal black breast cancer patients. It accounted for 14 percent of breast cancer cases in older black women, and only 16 percent of those in non-black women of any age.

It is unclear whether this subtype of breast cancer is occurring because of an inherited predisposition or because of something in the environment that black women are more likely to be exposed to.

Research may lead to a better understanding of what causes the aggressive subtype of breast cancer. Genetic profiling of cancer subtypes has led to a new generation of targeted drugs that have shown success. But for the basal-like subtype, no targeted therapies yet exist and doctors must use more conventional chemotherapy.

In the study, death rates remained higher for younger black women even when the basal-like subtype cases were removed from the data. That suggests disparities in access to screening, treatment and follow through support still probably account for much of the higher mortality rate among young black women.

How to Battle Obesity in Kids

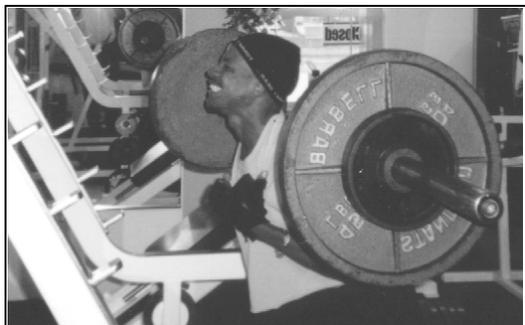
"Sugar is everywhere," says Dr. Lisa Hark, the host of a new TLC reality show called, "Honey, We're Killing the Kids" that confronts poor eating habits. "It is in their cereal, breakfast pastries, donuts, cookies, cakes, candies, ice cream, soda." The daily allotted maximum of sugar intake should be only 10 teaspoons per child.

Throw in heaping portions of fatty food and lack of exercise and it's no wonder America's seeing an epidemic of childhood obesity. The percentage of overweight U.S. children rose 20% in just four years, from nearly 14 percent in 2000 to 17 percent in 2004.

Tips to help stop bad nutrition from killing the kids:

- **Say "No":** "When it comes to food, parents really need to discipline kids," says Hark. "Every time I'm in the supermarket, I'm seeing whining, tantrum-throwing, screaming children begging for what they're seeing on television. The parents need to stop buying it and the kids won't even ask anymore." But parents can't buy and eat the junk food for themselves, they have to live by the same rules.
- **"Unplug Them":** "I'm shocked at the number of hours these kids watch television and play video games," says Hark. "The American Academy of Pediatrics' recommendation is less than two hours a day." The substitute for all that non-calorie-burning TV time: Try to find ways for kids to be active after school. Families can also exercise together.
- **Help Them Stop Drinking:** "People don't realize that what kids drink contributes thousands of sugar calories," says Hark. Gatorade, Kool-Aid, iced tea, regular soda all contribute. Keep it to one 12-ounce juice or energy drink a day. For the rest, drink water.
- **Serve Produce:** "Parents need to buy, offer, and encourage fruits and vegetables," says Hark. She recommends serving them up when the kids are usually hungry, like at breakfast, after school and before bed. Serve kids vegetables with a low-fat dip, or buy frozen fruit to make smoothies with.

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