

## TIPS TO BE PROACTIVE

### FOLLOW THE 7 HEALING PRACTICES:



- If you smoke, consider seeking support to help you quit.
- Move toward a healthy body weight and exercise daily.<sup>2</sup>
- Reduce stress, anxiety, and improve your quality of life with relaxation, meditation, and yoga.<sup>3</sup>
- Aim for a Mediterranean diet including more olive oil, vegetables and fruit every day.<sup>4</sup>
- Try acupuncture to help with depression, anxiety, fatigue, pain and hot flashes.<sup>5</sup>
- Surround yourself with a supportive health care team! Ask your oncology center about integrative medicine services such as massage, acupuncture, naturopathic medicine, counseling, nutritional supports, Reiki, laughter therapy, music therapy, yoga and other supportive care.
- For more information on these healing practices, see [www.BCCT.ngo](http://www.BCCT.ngo).

## REFERENCES

To download this brochure or view the references, please visit:  
<https://bcct.ngo/patient-brochures>



### AUTHORS/EDITORS:

Jen Green, ND, FABNO  
Gwen Stritter, MD  
Heather Wright, ND, FABNO  
Casey Martell, ND, MBA, FABNO  
Dugald Seely ND, MSc  
Ellen McDonell, ND  
Laura Pole, RN, MSN, OCNS



# WELLNESS DURING TAMOXIFEN TREATMENT

## INTEGRATIVE ONCOLOGY APPROACHES



A COLLABORATION OF  
[KNOWoncology.org](http://KNOWoncology.org),  
[BCCT.ngo](http://BCCT.ngo) and [OICC.ca](http://OICC.ca)

## TAMOXIFEN AND INTEGRATIVE CARE

Tamoxifen is an important medication for preventing breast cancer recurrence, however it sometimes causes side effects such as hot flashes, weight gain, mood changes, and increased inflammation and lipid levels. Complementary approaches may be helpful in managing some side effects from tamoxifen. Adding herbs or supplements to your cancer care plan is not always safe. It is important to consider interactions, dosing, and quality of products.<sup>1</sup> Please connect with a naturopathic doctor ([www.oncANP.org](http://www.oncANP.org)) or integrative oncology professional (<https://integrativeonc.org/>) for specific guidance.

## NUTRITION AND TAMOXIFEN

High vegetable intake is associated with reduced breast cancer recurrence in tamoxifen users.<sup>12</sup>



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Soy foods are safe for breast cancer survivors taking tamoxifen.<sup>6,7</sup> Some studies have found that soy intake improves survival<sup>8</sup> or recurrence<sup>9</sup> in people with a history of breast cancer, while other studies found no evidence of improved survival with no risk of harm.<sup>10</sup> Soy may be beneficial for cardiovascular disease prevention and risk of stroke.<sup>11</sup> Aim for organic whole soy foods such as soy milk, tofu, edamame, tempeh, and miso.

Drinking green tea may help prevent recurrence and is safe to combine with tamoxifen.<sup>13</sup>



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## NATURAL THERAPIES

Some natural therapies can work well with tamoxifen to improve overall health and quality of life.

- Melatonin may reduce depression in breast cancer survivors.<sup>14</sup> In people with advanced breast cancer, melatonin seemed to help tamoxifen work better<sup>15</sup> and it may improve quality of life.<sup>16</sup>
- CoQ10 can normalize blood lipid levels, lower inflammation and lower tumor markers in tamoxifen users.<sup>17</sup>
- Vitamin C can help lower inflammation and markers of oxidative stress in tamoxifen users.<sup>18</sup>
- Coriolus versicolor (turkey tail mushroom) may support immune function<sup>19</sup> and Ganoderma lucidum (reishi) mushroom may boost energy levels in breast cancer survivors.<sup>20</sup>
- Vitamin D3 supports mood, bone integrity, energy levels and immunity.<sup>21</sup>
- Black cohosh may be associated with a lower risk of breast cancer and lower recurrence in some studies, and has had no association with breast cancer risk in other studies.<sup>22</sup>
- In breast cancer survivors, adding vitamin E to tamoxifen for 5 years did not improve survival.<sup>23</sup>

To individualize your care plan, connect with a naturopathic doctor ([www.oncanp.org](http://www.oncanp.org)) or integrative oncology professional ([https://integrativeonc.org](https://integrativeonc.org/)). For more information on quality and sources for supplements, see [bcct.ngo](http://bcct.ngo).



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## NATURAL APPROACHES FOR HOT FLASHES

- Acupuncture<sup>24</sup> and Traditional Chinese Medicine<sup>25</sup> may reduce hot flashes in patients with breast cancer. Consult a trained practitioner including a licensed Naturopathic Doctor or acupuncturist for treatment.
- Taking magnesium alongside tamoxifen may reduce hot flashes.<sup>26</sup>
- Black cohosh has been studied for hot flashes, but studies have mixed results.<sup>27</sup>
- Two randomized controlled trials in breast cancer survivors with hot flashes showed that homeopathy did not help hot flashes, but did help quality of life more than placebo.<sup>28</sup>



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## PRECAUTIONS

- Diindolylmethane (DIM) may reduce the effectiveness of tamoxifen.<sup>29</sup>
- High dose curcumin, either with or without piperine, may decrease the effectiveness of tamoxifen by changing how it is processed.<sup>30</sup>