

What you eat can help prevent cancer

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You might think it's a matter of fate. Either cancer picks you or it doesn't - and there really isn't much you can do about it.

You might feel once you have it, medical treatment is all there is to help fight it.

Evelisse Capo, an instructor with The Cancer Project, doesn't agree.

What a person eats can aid in prevention and help those diagnosed through the life-threatening disease by eliminating some of the discomforts of treatment, Capo said.

On Thursday, Capo, a Cape Coral pharmacist and a Florida certified health educator, wrapped up a free four-week course at Ada's natural foods market on Pine Island Road. The Cancer Project course focused on how diet can be used toward prevention and discouraging cancer growth.

Capo said the course's purpose was to educate the community about the power of a healthy, plant-based diet. She said prevention is increased when unhealthy diets are swapped for whole grains, legumes, vegetables and fruits.

According to The Cancer Project Web site, these items are loaded with cancer-fighting antioxidants, phytochemicals, and fiber.

The Cancer Project is a non-profit, Washington D.C.-based organization that attempts to advance cancer prevention and survival through nutrition, education and research.

According to The Cancer Project statistics, more than 1,000,000 Americans are diagnosed with cancer each year.

Capo teaches the course throughout Lee County at health food stores, hospitals and schools. She said she plans to hold another course in Cape Coral again shortly but has nothing scheduled right now. About 15 attended Thursday's course.

"It's changed the way I eat," said North Fort Myers resident Carol Sharpless, 55.

Sharpless said she is a cancer survivor and attended the course in hopes of gaining additional knowledge that will keep the disease from returning.

After trying the vegan-style diet for about four weeks, Sharpless said she already feels the effects.

"You feel a lot healthier," she said. "It's amazing. I learned I like tofu and I learned how to cook it."

In addition to giving out recipes, Capo put on cooking demonstrations at each class and offered her students samples.

Thursday's menu included a cream veggie curry, couscous whole wheat, baby romaine salad with fruit flavor and a vegan chocolate mousse.

Christine Costa, 55, who said the sampling was her favorite part of the course, said she attended because cancer has a strong presence in her family and she is looking to avoid it.

Cape resident Cris Meeks said she attended because she has friends who are suffering and she was hoping to pick something up that might help them.

Ada's owner Eddie Bonadies said he invited Capo to run her classes with the intent of offering his customers an avenue to a healthier lifestyle.

"We're all about education for our customers," he said. "It's a great way to help people."

The course

Those interested in attending a Cancer Project course can visit cancerproject.org. If interested in having a course run in your community, business or school contact Evelisse Capo at AwakeToHealth@gmail.com.

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Abstract (Document Summary)

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