

This is the fifteenth newsletter in a series of ONCORG Community Conversations. They're focused on relationships between doctors and patients, and the complexity of treating cancer.

September 2026 – **Keeping the Weeds out of your Garden**



Rodney Thomas is a senior officer working for ONCORG, INC, headquartered in Mt. Laurel, NJ. ONCORG was developed as a comprehensive cancer support service for those seeking a first or second opinion for their cancer.

Mr. Thomas is a military veteran who served eight years in the USAF. He also spent eleven years in the automotive industry, ten years in healthcare and eight years with Apple Inc. supporting customer needs.

Keeping the Weeds out of your Garden

In our last article I talked about how cancer is like a weed. Cancer has a strong propensity to live, much like a weed in your garden. Highly respected oncology health systems like Memorial Sloan Kettering and MD Anderson use the analogy of comparing cancer to weeds in a garden or on your lawns. Our bodies are like a beautiful garden full of flowers and green pastures. In this article we'll talk about how to keep the weeds out, and our bodies healthy.

Before sharing some useful and informative information, I want to confess I can do better in my personal lifestyle, so this article serves as a useful reminder I need to practice what I write.

The most common cancer prevention steps commonly advertised are smoking, maintaining a recommended weight, skin care from overexposure to sun, limiting alcohol consumption, and just healthy eating. We're not going to talk about the obvious stuff.

Let's talk about the not so obvious: **'Getting a good night sleep'** and **'Limiting your sedentary lifestyle.'**

Getting a Good Night Sleep: We all have a human circadian rhythm cycle that regulates cellular repair, otherwise known as our biological sleep/wake cycle. If you recall in some of my prior articles we talked about how the body builds weaponry to fight cancer. Sleep helps maintain and optimize activity associated with creating natural killer (NK) cells, which are white blood cells that defend your body against viruses and tumors. That means sleep helps your body repair damaged cells, and prevent mutations that can lead to tumors.

Our circadian rhythm helps keep a nice 'work' schedule. A lack of sufficient rest decreases NK cell activity and weaponized function. This lowers the body's ability to fight infections, common colds, and natural body invasions. This stimulates natural killer cells that hunt and destroy early cancer cells.

Consistent sleep discipline encourages circadian genes to stop abnormal cell growth.

Oddly enough, a good night's sleep in total darkness helps your body release melatonin, which has tumor suppressing properties. I was stationed in Alaska with the USAF, and I got my share of melatonin.

A lack of sleep changes white blood cells and monocytes (cells that fight germs), causing your immune system to act like it is under attack. White blood cells protect your body from infections, and other diseases, and helps repair damaged cells.

Limiting your Sedentary Lifestyle: I just purchased a beautiful leather recliner with lots of controls. I love my recliner but it's not good for me. Most cancer doctors will tell you your risk of being affected by cancer is 60% genetic and 40% related to your way of life, which is in your individual control. We're talking about sleep, diet, relationships, use of risky substances, the relationship you keep, and sedentary practices.

Our jobs and daily behaviors include sitting, reclining, lying down watching TV, and little or no movement. This applies to more than 25% of American adults. We won't talk about children who now park themselves in front of a video game, or play with their cellular devices.

I worked for Apple for eight years, and left two years ago as a tech support engineer. I remember when Apple introduced Parental and Monitoring Controls. This was and is part of campaign to reduce sedentary practices. Proper adult training starts at an early age, doesn't it?

Much like a lack of sleep, inactivity causes the buildup of belly fat. It also trigger a steady, low-level inflammatory response throughout your blood vessels and organs.

Sitting all day leads to decreased muscle mass, and now new studies have tied all of this to a higher risk of cancer. This following article was published in the journal PLOS Medicine, and it shows the conclusive evidence linking sedentary behavior to cancer.

https://journals.plos.org/plosmedicine/article?id=10.1371/journal.pmed.1004767&utm_source=pr&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=plos006

According to the above study, 91,292 UK Biobank participants wore activity monitors and they were tracked for an average of 12.38 years.

Each additional hour per day of prolonged sedentary behavior was associated with a 10% higher hazard of cancer death, whereas each additional hour of interrupted sedentary behavior was associated with a 19% lower hazard of cancer death.

So I encourage all our visitors to learn from all of this. We're not asking for a great deal. Break up your sedentary behavior, walk at a slow speed or brisk speed, or even do some chores.

Rodney Thomas

Rodney Thomas
ONCORG – Chief Communication Officer