

BATTLING BREAST CANCER A TIMES-NEWS SPECIAL REPORT



Loaves: Fighting with food

Continued from 1D

fruit intake. They switched to good fats, such as olive and canola oil, she replaced white bread with whole wheat, and she lost weight.

"I joined Weight Watchers and became a lifer."

Her choices were all good ones. Karen Schnaekel, certified oncology dietitian at the Regional Cancer Center, listed everything Perino did as ways to fight inflammation in the body, reducing the chances of cancer recurrence. Combined with exercise — Perino walks daily — she's doing the best she can.

"According to the American Institute for Cancer Research, a combination of a healthy diet, active lifestyle and a healthy body weight can lower your risk of cancer," Schnaekel said.

Megan Collins, 43, was diagnosed with breast cancer at 37, and she had three lumpectomies, six rounds of chemotherapy and 36 rounds of radiation.

It took years, but she's emerged healthier than ever.

She and her husband, Mike Collins, recently competed in an Iron Man triathlon in Kentucky.

"Before my diagnosis, I ate anything and did not pay attention to it," Collins said. "I worked out a lot and didn't think I'd have to pay attention."

But cancer changed all of that. The third-grade teacher at Tracy School took her own lessons to heart.

"Once you have a reason to learn something, you're going to embrace it," she said. "I had a reason to



JACK HANRAHAN/Erie Times-News

Eileen Perino, of Erie, a breast cancer survivor, mixes ground turkey and bread crumbs to make turkey sliders.

understand how food affects me."

Collins said she now avoids foods that might contain hormones, such as soy, red meat and dairy. She drinks almond and coconut milk and makes room for a salad every day.

She avoids sugar and refined carbohydrates.

"Cancer cells thrive on sugar," Collins said. "I go for whole-wheat flour, beans, legumes and whole-wheat pasta."

She considers every bite of food in a new light.

"The food I put into my body — there's a reason I put it into my body now," she said. "There's a science behind the foods we eat."

Erie jeweler Elisa Guida, founder and executive director of Strings For A Cure Foundation, a breast cancer charity, received her first of two breast cancer diagnoses when she was 40 and had just gotten married.

She took the same crash course as Perino and Collins. Now she, too, avoids processed foods, sugar and refined carbs.

"I don't eat the white stuff: potatoes, white bread, white rice. Instead I'll eat quinoa and if I'm going to eat bread, I do a whole-grain and dip it in olive oil," Guida said. "If I bake something, I'll use whole-wheat flour."

She said the transition was effortless.

"I thought I was a healthy eater," Guida said. "I was never a fast food eater, or a soda drinker and I always cooked."

"So once I learned about all this, it was easy," she said. "I love vegetables. I like cooking with fresh herbs."

Guida said she and her family don't deprive themselves.

"We love food," she said. "When you eat this way, you eat a lot of food. It's just healthy food."

All three women said they felt better when their diets changed, that they had more energy, and none of them will ever look back.

"It's second nature now," Perino said. "We don't have the bad stuff in the house. I'm not a fanatic

TIPS FOR YOU

Five nutritional guidelines for breast cancer survivors from Karen Schnaekel, certified oncology dietitian at the Regional Cancer Center.

1. Maintain a healthy weight. Being overweight is associated with an increased risk of breast cancer or recurrence of breast cancer, especially in post-menopausal women.
2. Eat more of a variety of fruit, vegetables, whole grains and legumes.
3. Limit consumption of red meat (beef and pork), and avoid processed meats.
4. Limit consumption of salty foods and foods processed with sodium.
5. Avoid sugary drinks and limit consumption of calorically dense foods.
6. Be physically active for at least 30 minutes every day.

about it. We go out now and then, but I just account for it."

For these women, sticking with a healthy diet isn't about the scale or the shape of the body they see in the mirror. It's much deeper than that.

"I don't want to have to go through another breast cancer diagnosis," Guida said.

Perino agreed, adding "I just want to be alive with my husband and grow old."

JENNIE GEISLER

writes about her adventures as a home cook every Wednesday. You can reach her at 870-1885. Send e-mail to jennie.geisler@timesnews.com. Visit her blog at GoErieblogs.com. Follow her on Twitter at twitter.com/ETNgeisler.

ANTI-INFLAMMATORY CHERRY SMOOTHIE

1 cup frozen tart cherries
½ frozen banana
1 cup coconut water
Blend.
Makes 2

— Megan Collins
■ Per serving: 87 calories, 0.3 gram fat, 2 grams fiber, 1.5 grams protein, 22 grams carbohydrate, 25 milligrams sodium, 0 cholesterol
Values are approximate.

carbohydrate, 144 milligrams sodium, 0 cholesterol
Values are approximate.

GREEN SMOOTHIE
2 handfuls of fresh spinach
1 banana
2 cups of frozen fruit, blueberries, raspberries.
½ to ¾ cup water, or coconut water
Blend.
Makes 2

— Megan Collins
■ Per serving: 139 calories, 1.3 grams fat, 6.4 grams fiber, 2.1 grams protein, 33 grams carbohydrate, 26 milligrams sodium, 0 cholesterol
Values are approximate.

CHOCOLATE AVOCADO SMOOTHIE

1 avocado, peeled and seeded
1 heaping tablespoon cocoa
1½ cups almond milk
1 cup frozen strawberries
Blend.
Makes 2

— Megan Collins
■ Per serving: 201 calories, 16 grams fat, 9.3 grams fiber, 3.4 grams protein, 17 grams

BABA GANOUSH

1 medium eggplant in ¼-inch thick slices
2 to 4 garlic cloves (1 use 4)
¼ hot Hungarian pepper sliced, optional
2 to 3 tablespoons tahini
¼ cup water
Juice of 1 fresh lemon
Zest of one lemon
Drizzle extra-virgin olive oil

1. Grill eggplant slices in Foreman grill for 3 minutes, remove skin and set aside.
2. Place garlic cloves and pepper slices, if using, in food processor and grind for about 1 minute. Add eggplant slices and grind for

about 2 minutes. Add tahini and grind for 1 minute. Add water and lemon juice and grind again until blended.

3. Garnish with lemon zest and a drizzle of extra-virgin olive oil.
Serves 8

— Elisa Guida
■ Per serving: 60 calories, 3.7 grams fat, 2.3 grams fiber, 1.7 grams protein, 6.2 grams carbohydrate, 8.8 milligrams sodium, 0 cholesterol
Values are approximate.

GROUND TURKEY SLIDERS

2½ pounds lean ground turkey
5 eggs, beaten
4 ounces milk (I use Lactaid)
2 cups homemade breadcrumbs
1½ rounded teaspoons parsley
1½ rounded teaspoons onion powder
1½ rounded teaspoons garlic powder
1½ to 2 teaspoons salt and pepper

ingredients and mix thoroughly.
2. Make 2-ounce patties to fit on whole-wheat slider rolls.

Note: You can use the same mixture for meatballs and meatloaf.
For meatballs: Roll into 1½-ounce meatballs and place into slow cooker with spaghetti sauce to cover. Cook on low for 6 to 8 hours.
For meatloaf: Form one

loaf and bake in loaf pan or on baking sheet at 350 degrees for up to 1 hour.
Makes 18 2-ounce sliders

— Eileen Perino
■ Per slider, no bun: 159 calories, 6.5 grams fat, 0.5 gram fiber, 16 grams protein, 9.1 grams carbohydrate, 352 milligrams sodium, 96 milligrams cholesterol
Values are approximate.

HUMMUS

1 can chickpeas, drained
¼ cup tahini
2½ tablespoons warm water
2 ½ tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
4 garlic cloves (you can use 2)
1 teaspoon cumin
Juice of ½ lemon
Jalapeño (optional)
Lemon zest

1. Put garlic cloves in a food processor and grind for about 1 minute

2. Combine chickpeas, tahini, warm water, olive oil and grind. Add juice of ½ lemon and grind, add cumin and process to blend.

3. Add more lemon juice and jalapeño if desired.
4. Garnish with lemon

zest and drizzle with olive oil.
Makes 2 cups

— Elisa Guida
■ Per serving: 148 calories, 9 grams fat, 3.1 grams fiber, 4 grams protein, 14 grams carbohydrate, 166 milligrams sodium, 0 cholesterol
Values are approximate.

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Presented by UPMC HEALTH PLAN

- Ann Jillian -

Emmy nominated and Golden Globe winning actress and singer will be sharing her message about the hopeful side of breast cancer

Wednesday, October 9, 4:30 pm - Ambassador Conference Center

Tickets starting at \$15 and are available at HeadlineEvents.com

- Bras For A Cause -
Presented by Braserie, Dearie!

October 1 through October 15

Submit your decorated bra in support of Breast Cancer Awareness for a chance to win prizes from Braserie, Dearie! and Panache

GoErie.com/BrasForACause

- All Month Long -

Stories and features related to Breast Cancer Awareness will be featured in the Erie Times-News and online at GoErie.com/PINK