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The Immune System Is Your Body's Defense Against Cancer

Analysis by Dr. Joseph Mercola | June 20, 2026

STORY AT-A-GLANCE

- Cancer is affecting younger individuals more than before. There's even a case wherein a 13-year-old has developed metastatic pancreatic cancer
- Inflammation plays a central role in cancer development, with poor diet, environmental chemicals, and persistent viral infections contributing to immune system suppression
- The COVID-19 jab contributes to cancer risk through persistent inflammation from spike proteins
- Your immune system, particularly T-cells and natural killer cells, is crucial for fighting cancer
- Practical preventative measures include eating whole foods instead of processed foods, reducing chemical exposure, maintaining proper sleep, and avoiding mRNA shots

Cancer was once viewed as a disease that rarely surfaced in younger individuals, but today, that assumption no longer holds. So, what makes the current cancer trend so alarming? This, along with other topics, was discussed by Dr. Patrick Soon-Shiong, a surgeon and businessman, in an interview with Tucker Carlson, featured above.[1]

Most arguments about cancer center on genetic predisposition or external carcinogens like cigarettes. That conversation has merit, but it misses a key piece of the picture — your body's own immune defenses. The bigger story involves strengthening the body's protective mechanisms, and avoiding repeated hits to those defenses that allow cancer cells to take hold.

Investigating the Root Cause

Younger individuals once escaped the worst forms of cancer, but that has changed. Soon-Shiong tells the story of a case of a 13-year-old with metastatic pancreatic cancer, which in the past was basically unheard of. A growing body of clinical observation suggests that these cancers progress faster than older standards would predict, prompting doctors to label them **"turbocharged" tumors**.

- **Inflammation is at the root of cancer —** In Soon-Shiong's words, your body "must inhibit the thing called P53 … and protect your body from … cancer. And if it persists and causes inflammation and inhibits P53, it begins to have the hallmarks of an oncogenic virus."

- **The rise of modern diets contribute to cancer —** Soon-Shiong noted that ultraprocessed foods and other toxins keep a person's gut in disarray. That scenario can worsen the immune system's struggles. Excess linoleic acid from canola, soy, or similar oils triggers chronic inflammatory signals in many individuals.

  These signals disrupt the cellular environment that NK cells and T-cells need for normal function. Meanwhile, diets that rely on refined sugar and cheap filler starches can further undermine metabolic health, though the problem runs deeper than sugar alone.

- **Manmade chemicals in the environment also contribute to cancer —** These include PFAS, red dyes, pesticide residues, and continuous exposure to microplastics and endocrine disruptors that hamper the body's inherent defenses. Extra stress placed on immune cells can push them toward a suppressed state, giving malignant cells the opportunity to thrive.

Some interpret these trends as a perfect storm of poor nutrition, hidden toxins, and immunosuppression. Yet Soon-Shiong remains guardedly hopeful. He points to practical methods that hinge on T-cell function and a different approach to therapy. By focusing on the body's innate ability to kill tumors, he believes more children and younger adults will be able to escape from this dreaded disease.

Is COVID-19 Altering Your Immune System in New Ways?

Soon-Shiong places part of the blame for rising cancer rates on persistent, chronic inflammation. His suspicion includes both COVID infections and the COVID jabs, wherein the virus' spike protein lingers in tissues well after an active infection has ended. That prolonged presence maintains a continuous inflammatory response, fueling immune dysregulation.

- **Standard antibody-based COVID shots have not cleared the virus from the body —** Soon-Shiong wonders if repeated boosters further embed these spike protein fragments. He believes the shot keeps your immune system busy without resolving the underlying threat.

- **COVID-19 gets into every cell of your body —** Soon-Shiong also noted that spike protein, either from infection or the COVID shot, penetrates all of your cells, including the cells lining your blood vessels. As he explains in the interview:

  > *"It goes wherever you have the thing called the ACE2 receptor, which is in the blood vessels. So, wherever we have a blood vessel in your body, it's where it's going to go and it has an ACE2 receptor on that blood vessel. That's where it can go because that's the purpose of the spike protein — to penetrate, to hijack that ACE2 receptor and get into their cells."*

- **Spike protein results in different adverse health events down the line —** Once spike protein enters your body, that's when different complications arise, depending on the tissues affected. According to Soon-Shiong:

  > *"That's why it gets in the pancreas. That's why you have brain fog. It disrupts the blood vessels of the brain and causes mitochondrial dysfunction. It's why in the colon, which is high in the GI tract, is a high ACE2 receptor [organ].*

*That's why pancreas has a high ACE2 receptor where — that's why you people have in the heart — you have dysfunction, you, you've seen **young people have sudden heart attacks**."*

- **Viruses have caused cancer in other contexts —** Hepatitis leads to liver cancer, while HPV can spark cervical and throat cancers. A suppressed immune system cannot remove these intruders. That same risk appears in the post-COVID era.

  Individuals with persistent inflammation are more likely to see T-cells go dormant, as Soon-Shiong described. The body basically loses its first responders against malignant transformation, whether the intruder is an outside virus or a mutated cell from within.

In the interview, Soon-Shiong goes deeper into the topic of cancers stemming from viruses due to inflammation, so I highly recommend listening to the whole thing. He concludes:

"What we know about virally induced cancers is well established. We know that if you get hepatitis, you get liver cancer. Hepatitis is a virus infection. We know if you get human papillomavirus, HPV, you get cervical cancer … If you get HIV, you get Kaposi sarcoma …

We call that oncogenic viruses in medical terms, meaning viruses that are … carcinogenic. And the fundamental basis for that are threefold. The hallmarks of our oncogenic virus is one; it must persist.

And why? Because it continues to create inflammation. And … with inflammation you get suppression because your body's trying to suppress it. It must inhibit the thing called P53 that's in your body to try and protect your body from … cancer. And if it persists and causes inflammation and, and [it] inhibits P53, it begins to have the hallmarks of an oncogenic virus."

Your Immune System Is the Foundational Pillar Against Cancer

A typical complete blood count (CBC) includes measurements of white blood cells. However, many oncologists rarely track T-lymphocyte or NK-cell counts unless something extreme surfaces. That omission frustrates Soon-Shiong.

- **Your immune system is key to fighting cancer —** Soon-Shiong notes that T-cells and NK cells handle the main job of seeking and destroying aberrant cells. If those protective warriors vanish, standard treatments may buy time, but fail in the end.

> *"It's … job is to kill … anything that threatens the body, whether you, the body has infection, if you have TB, you have HIV, if you have hepatitis, you have COVID. These cells are there to recognize these infected cells and kill it.*
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> *As you and I are sitting here today, our stem cells are growing in order to replenish parts of your body, your heart, you, if you didn't have that, you wouldn't have a heart at the age of 14. You need those stem cells. But mathematically, there are some cells that are transformed and your body recognizes that through these natural killer cells and kills it,"* he says.

- **Immune system cells protect your body from tumor growth —** In Soon-Shiong's words, your immune system cells are "nature's first responder." He continues:

> *"That's how we are all protected, and we are [in] the state of equilibrium or balance. On the other hand, the moment either the tumor finds a way to hide from these cells, or your body's, or the tumor causes these cells to be suppressed.*
>
> *And that's why I call this the suppressor cells. And there are certain cells in your body called Treg cells or myeloid-derived suppressor cells … that, when they get upregulated, you've lost your protection.*
>
> *And so, the question then is, how do we understand this balance? How do we increase the killers and how do we decrease the suppressors?"*

- **Traditional cancer treatments only provide short-term results —** Chemotherapy and radiation, which often crush immune cells, produce a short remission in many. "But then, so often you watch it roaring back," Soon-Shiong says.

  That's because the protective cells died along with the original tumor. The correct approach, he says, involves subtle stress on the tumor to expose it, followed by immunological activation to finish the job.

- **Teach your own body to create a "bioshield" —** Soon-Shiong references a product he's currently developing called "BioShield." While it is injected into your body, it's not a vaccine, but rather a training mechanism for your immune system cells, which will help purge cancer cells from your body. He explains:

  > *"A tumor has molecules that is foreign to the rest of your body. And if you educate your T-cell, you recognize as molecules that is foreign to the rest of your body that T-cell can remember. Now you have a memory T-cell … We now have bladder cancer patients who have lost their bladder in complete remission for nine years …"*

While BioShield looks promising, it's unlikely to be a magic bullet against cancer. That's why Soon-Shiong stresses that cancer is all about your immune system. If your immune system is in top shape, your risk for cancer will be significantly reduced.

Practical Ways to Strengthen Your Body's Defenses

To lower your cancer risk, start addressing what's weakening your immune system in the first place. Inflammation, toxins, stress, poor food choices, and lack of sleep aren't just small issues — they are the main reasons why your body fails to spot and destroy cancer cells. Here are my recommendations:

1. **Clean up your diet and eat more whole foods —** If you constantly rely on frozen dinners, fast food, or packaged snacks, it's time to shift. Aside from being nutritionally lacking, these are loaded with dyes, additives, and inflammatory

vegetable oils that confuse your immune system.

Swap them out with fresh produce, grass fed meats, and whole ingredients you recognize. Cook meals at home and store them in glass or stainless steel instead of plastic.

2. **Cut your exposure to harmful chemicals —** If you are a parent, office worker, or anyone constantly touching printed receipts, using fragranced cleaners, or microwaving in plastic, you are surrounded by chemicals that disrupt your immune cells. These chemicals don't just sit on the surface — they enter your bloodstream and quietly weaken your immune defenses.

3. **Spend enough time outdoors and get sufficient high-quality sleep —** If your schedule has you staying up late, glued to screens, or skipping daylight, your immune system isn't recharging.

   Go outside each morning for natural light — it resets your body clock. Sleep at the same time each night in a cool, dark room for seven to nine hours at a consistent schedule. Even missing just an hour or two of deep sleep affects your immune system's ability to function at its best.

4. **Don't get the COVID shot —** If you already got the shot, don't get any more boosters or mRNA gene therapy shots. Following this strategy immediately ends the assault on your body. But if you've already developed a shot-related injury, the next section contains more in-depth tips.

Other Strategies to Help Address COVID-Related Injuries

If you or a family member is suffering from long COVID or adverse effects from the shot, know that there is still hope for recovery.

- **Protect your health with these protocols —** I recommend you go over the I-RECOVER program by the Front Line COVID-19 Critical Care Alliance (FLCCC). It provides extensive information about how to treat long COVID[2] and post-vaccine

injuries.[3]

- **Get rid of electromagnetic fields (EMFs) in your home —** In addition to the measures discussed by the FLCCC, I recommend reducing your EMF exposure in your home. Research has shown that manmade sources, such as your Wi-Fi router and 5G towers "can disturb the homeostasis of free radicals leading to dysfunctions such as the 'cellular stress response.'"[4]

- **Minimize linoleic acid (LA) intake —** Your fat intake matters because your mitochondria contain cardiolipin, which influences mitophagy and overall mitochondrial quality control.

  To promote proper cardiolipin function, boosting omega-3 fat intake is important while simultaneously cutting back on omega-6 fat. However, don't make the mistake of eating too much omega-3, as eventually it will cause the same damage as eating too much omega-6. For a more detailed explanation on this balance, read "**Linoleic Acid — The Most Destructive Ingredient in Your Diet**."

- **Optimize your vitamin D level —** This nutrient plays an important role in supporting your immune system. Research shows that low vitamin D levels are linked to an increased risk of cancers.[5] Vitamin D attaches to the vitamin D receptor in your cells, creating a cascade of signals that affect how cancer cells grow, develop, and survive.[6] Studies have also confirmed that **vitamin D helps prevent respiratory infections, including COVID-19**.

  I recommend raising your vitamin D level to a range between 60 ng/mL and 80 ng/mL. To know if you're hitting that range, you need to get tested. For more information about the benefits of vitamin D for cancer, as well as tips on how to optimize it properly, read "**More Evidence Showing Vitamin D Combats Cancer**."

Frequently Asked Questions About the Immune System and Cancer

Q: Why is cancer affecting younger people more than before?

A: According to Dr. Patrick Soon-Shiong, the increase in cancer cases among children and young adults is a result of immune system damage caused by chronic inflammation, poor diet, environmental toxins, and lingering effects from COVID-19 infections or shots. These cases often involve rapidly progressing "turbocharged" tumors that behave more aggressively than traditional cancers.

Q: What role does inflammation play in the development of cancer?

A: Inflammation is central to cancer's progression. Chronic inflammation suppresses key tumor-suppressing proteins like P53 and compromises the immune system's ability to eliminate cancerous cells. This persistent immune activation, sometimes from viral proteins like the COVID-19 spike protein, allows malignant cells to thrive by weakening the body's natural defense mechanisms like T-cells and natural killer (NK) cells produced by your immune system.

Q: How do diet and environmental toxins increase cancer risk?

A: Modern diets high in ultraprocessed foods, refined sugars, and vegetable oils (like canola and soy) disrupt gut health and fuel systemic inflammation. Simultaneously, everyday exposure to manmade chemicals such as "forever chemicals," food dyes, pesticides, and microplastics overwhelm the immune system. This perfect storm of poor nutrition and hidden toxins suppress immune cells, allowing tumors to escape detection and grow unchecked.

Q: How is COVID-19 linked to rising cancer risks?

A: Soon-Shiong theorizes that both COVID-19 infections and shots contribute to persistent inflammation and immune dysfunction. The virus (or spike protein from the vaccine) enters cells via ACE2 receptors found throughout the body — including the heart, brain, and pancreas — and disrupt mitochondrial function. Over time, this leads to increased risk of cancer.

Q: What strategies can strengthen the immune system and lower cancer risk?

A: Key strategies include:

- Eating whole, unprocessed foods to reduce inflammation
- Avoiding harmful chemicals in plastics, printed receipts, and fragranced products
- Improving sleep and natural light exposure to support immune regulation
- Reconsidering COVID-19 boosters, especially for those experiencing adverse effects

Sources and References

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- [5] The Journal of Steroid Biochemistry and Molecular Biology July 2023, Volume 231, 106308
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