

Prayer, natural extract AHCC keeping pastor's leukemia at bay

NEWS By Carolyn Susman - Special to the Daily News



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It's three years and four months, but who's counting?

Dr. Dwight Stevens, that's who.

The former dermatologist and Paramount Church pastor says it has been that long since an over-the-counter compound known as AHCC (Active Hexose Correlated Compound) has, apparently, slowed the progression of his leukemia.

Stevens was diagnosed with chronic lymphocytic leukemia in September 2006. He experienced a steadily rising white blood count until August 2009, when, with his wife's encouragement, he added healing prayers and AHCC to his daily regimen.

The result – if, indeed, it is the effect of the AHCC – has been miraculous. His disease appears to have stabilized. His white cell count, used to track the progression of the disease, stopped rising.

When we first discussed his use of this product, two years ago, he was still stunned by what seemed to be the effectiveness of this herbal extract.

“Natural remedies are new to me,” he said. “I did not initially embrace it wholeheartedly.”

Today, he is more relaxed with the product's possible benefits. His brother, who has the same condition, has also seen a good outcome so far with the mushroom extract. Neither has experienced any unpleasant side effects.

In fact, Stevens says, he researched everywhere to be certain side effects were minimal or nonexistent before he agreed to take the alternative treatment.

On its website, Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center writes that animal studies suggest that AHCC has antioxidant effects and may improve resistance to bacterial and viral infections.

But with a medical mind, and knowing how hard it can be in medicine to prove cause and effect, Stevens thought about challenging his good health status. About a year ago, he decided he would stop taking the AHCC.

"I am a trained medical doctor and medicine seeks proof," he says. "I thought, 'Let's find out if this really is making a difference or not.' Let's be scientific about this."

But his wife strenuously objected, and he eventually deferred to her. She didn't want him to press his luck, so he has continued to take two capsules a day.

The company distributing the AHCC, Quality of Life Labs, has produced a case study, with Steven's permission, detailing his outcome. Stevens now gets his capsules for free. He is happy to let himself be used for this purpose.

As a minister, he sees his introduction to the extract as more than fortuitous. He sees it as the work of God.

"I believe God has protected and provided for me, as he always has done," he says. "I feel blessed and thankful."

Speaking out about his condition is a "personal testimony of God's love and protection," and so he has no problem spreading the news of his outcome or of the product.

He views his medical status as the result of science and faith.

"I continue to believe in traditional medicine and take medical mission teams to Third World countries every year. But I also am willing to pray with people and anoint them with oil as instructed in James 5:14," he says.

What he told me two years ago, he said, still stands.

"What do I make of this? All I can say is what has happened to me now. I can't claim one approach worked over another. But I believe in a combination of faith in God and using common sense and reason, and being open to remedies outside the mainstream. Faith and reason can co-exist. We believe in prayer and natural remedies."

And they both seem to be working for him this Christmas.



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