

Irish Independent 

Myhealth

**'I believe  
the link  
between  
dairy and  
breast  
cancer is as  
strong as  
the link  
between  
smoking  
and lung  
cancer'**



**I'M A SURVIVOR:**  
Jane Plant has  
battled cancer  
for 26 years



# Irish Independent

Cancer sufferer Jane Plant believes that diet can help you deal with the disease, she tells **Ailín Quinlan**

**H**aving cancer, Jane Plant once wrote, is a "miserable business." Coming from a woman who's had a mastectomy, 12 sessions of chemotherapy, 35 radiotherapy treatments and has been battling the disease for more than 26 years, this has to be the under-statement of the year.

One of the world's leading geochemists, Professor Jane Plant CBE, Professor of Geochemistry at Imperial College, London, has held a string of prestigious posts throughout her career, including a stint as chief scientist of the British Geological Survey from 2000 to 2005.

She's also an internationally best-selling author - her latest book, containing the wisdom distilled from over a quarter of a century spent at the cancer frontline - 'Beat Cancer: How to Regain Control of your Health and Your Life' - was written in collaboration with cancer expert Professor Mustafa Djamgoz.

Now 68, she believes diet and lifestyle play a crucial role in beating the disease.

It all started for Plant back in 1987, when she was attending a conference on gold exploration in Canada. Following a trip down a goldmine she had returned to her hotel room for a shower when she suddenly noticed a lump in her left breast.

"I phoned my GP in England and he told me to go to Princess Mary Hospital in Toronto," recalls Plant, who has no family history of cancer.

"They carried out tests and confirmed that it was cancer."

Then aged 42, Plant attended the rest of the conference at which she was a speaker, and, on her return to England went to hospital and ended up having a left radical mastectomy.

"I was told not to worry, that it had not spread and that my lymph nodes were unaffected. They said to forget about it, but being a scientist, I couldn't."

She followed a recommended cancer diet - the Bristol Diet, as part of which, she had a daily organic low-fat yoghurt.

Five years later she found another lump, this time under her left arm. "I persuaded the doctor that it was growing and they took

it out and gave me a thorough examination."

Not long afterwards, another lump appeared close to the site of the first.

"They took that out. They gave me 35 radiology treatments. My ovaries were irradiated to induce menopause."

Plant, now aged 47, was again given the all-clear.

"Six weeks later I found another lump behind my collarbone. That was taken out and proved to be cancerous."

"Within a few weeks another huge lump grew on the same site; it was also cancer - it was about the size of a boiled egg. I was having chemotherapy but it was not really working."

In August 1993 - just over 20 years ago - the mother-of-three was informed that she had only two months to live "if we're lucky".

**H**er husband Peter, a mineralogist and gemologist had just returned from a trip to China and she and Peter were discussing possible reasons why so few Chinese women had breast cancer when realisation struck:

"He said that they didn't have a dairy industry and they didn't have any dairy at all at that time."

Plant immediately eliminated dairy from her diet:

"I gave up the low-fat yoghurt I was having every day and in six weeks the huge lump had gone."

And that was it.

Until 2011 when she got another warning in the shape of a very large lump which suddenly appeared beneath her collarbone:

"I had a huge lump which came up beneath my collarbone."

"It was like the top of a large mug, and the cancer had also gone into the lining of my right lung."

"I had little tumours all through my right lung."

When she thought about it, she realised she had become a bit lax about my diet:

"I wasn't checking ingredients, and, when I looked, I found that milk powder was contained in some of the food I was eating."

Her son Tom, who is a doctor, advised her to go back on the strict, non-dairy diet and she said she would:

"He said promise me - and I said

"I promise!" Plant stuck to both promise and diet, and within 30 weeks the lump had reduced to about the size of a 50p piece.

"A few weeks later it had completely vanished."

"I'm still free, my last check-up was in June and I was told everything is now completely back to normal."

She believes that there is a link between

these to complete your orthodox treatment."

She strongly believes the link between dairy and breast cancer is similar to that between smoking and lung cancer.

Dr. Catherine Logan, Nutrition Manager, National Dairy Council, disagrees.

"Many factors are thought to potentially influence the development of breast cancer including

genetics and various lifestyle choices. "Recommendations to universally eliminate dairy foods, without suitably qualified and individually tailored medical advice and basis, are very concerning."

"The milk, yogurt and cheese food group offers a range of essential nutrients, and are an important feature of the Irish diet."

"Cutting them out of the diet is likely to impact the overall nutritional quality of the diet."

"If anyone has concerns regarding their diet and health - including breast cancer, they should speak to their GP or a qualified dietitian."

Plant believes cancer patients should take the conventional treatment but should complement it by switching to the diet and exercise regime she recommends.

One of her diets, for those with active cancer, is essentially almost entirely vegan using proper living food.

The second diet is for prevention, for people who are in remission.

"You're allowed small amounts of animal protein but no dairy - you eat masses of vegetables and fruit and any vegetable milk you like, eg soya almond, oat and rice and use good sources of protein such as lentils, chickpeas, beans etc."

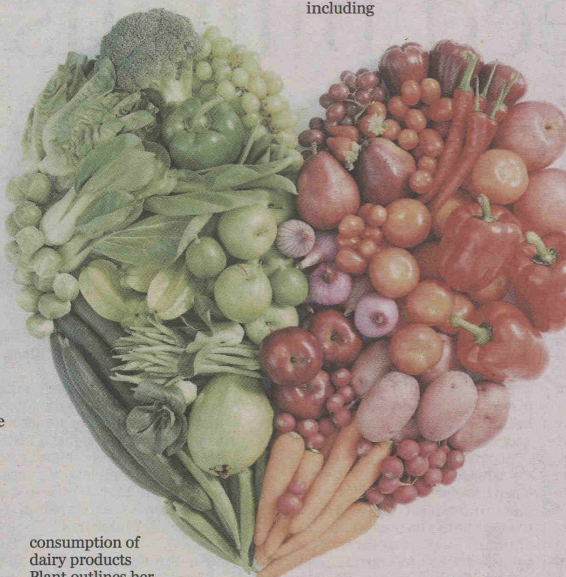
Enjoy plenty of protein but take as much as possible from vegetable sources such as lentils and keep salt and sugar to a minimum in favour of seasonings with anti-cancer action, such as the curcumin in turmeric.

Wholegrain cereals are also good for the body, says Plant, because they contain detoxing enzymes and substances which help suppress the growth of tumours.

Drink lots of water, she says, but avoid bottled - she believes harmful plasticising chemicals can migrate from the plastic container into the water.

Cancer, believes Plant, is a clever disease, so evasive that you must attack it on every possible front.

Professor Jane Plant is one of the keynote speakers at the **Your Health Show**, which takes place next month at the **RDS Dublin**. Visit [www.yourhealthshow.ie](http://www.yourhealthshow.ie) for more information.



consumption of dairy products Plant outlines her thesis:

"Basically dairy has now got a lot of oestrogen in it because it's common practise to milk pregnant cows, which has driven up the oestrogen content of milk. It also contains tiny proteins called growth factors, and these growth factors directly promote cancer."

"We now know that cancer is epigenetic, which means cancer genes can be switched on but also off. Some of the key factors are diet and lifestyle and you need to use



**My last check-up was in June and everything is now back to normal**



## Plant's advice can also help with type 2 diabetes

THE incidence of Type 2 diabetes is rising around the world - in Ireland it's estimated that there are about 30,000 people with this progressive condition.

Type 2 can sometimes be treated with diet and exercise, but more often the condition, which usually develops slowly in adulthood, may require anti-diabetic medicine and/or insulin injections.

"Type 2 diabetes is about the body

producing insulin but the cells become resistant to the insulin and won't allow it in - this causes the problem," says Professor Plant, who believes that the condition is an auto-immune disease caused by eating too much animal protein, especially dairy, and who has developed a diet which she believes can help fight the condition.

"Many people go blind with diabetes.

The blindness is caused by retinopathy, which in turn is caused by a growth factor often found in a high level in milk, especially if the cow has mastitis," says Plant.

"I have helped two people reverse Type 2 diabetes by putting them on my strict vegan diet along with the relevant supplements and they no longer require medication."

While some so-called vegan diets are poor, she says the diet she recommends is based on what she calls "proper living healthy food, not food which has been artificially produced to replicate something else like soya which has been made into 'bacon'."

"I tell people to go on my Plant Programme One diet, which is in my book 'The Plant Programme'," she says.