

Does Essiac Tea Cure Cancer?

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In the mid-1920's, Rene Caisse (pronounced "reen case") was head nurse at the Sisters of Providence Hospital in a small town in northern Ontario, Canada. While nursing an elderly patient, Rene noticed that the patient had a scar on her breast. The patient said it was left over from an advanced breast cancer which she had over 30 years earlier. Her doctors had wanted to remove her breast immediately, but having no money for the surgery, she decided instead to use a natural herbal remedy suggested by an old Indian Medicine Man from the local Ajibe tribe.

The Medicine Man showed her certain herbs (such as burdock root, sheep sorrel herb, slippery elm bark, and turkey rhubarb root), and instructed her to make a tea from those herbs, and to drink it every day. She was immediately cured of cancer, and there had been no recurrence in the 30 years since then.

Rene Caisse promptly jotted down the names of the herbs that the patient told her she had used, and decided that if she should ever have cancer in the future, she would use that herbal tea.



A few months thereafter, Rene received word that her aunt had been diagnosed with cancer of the stomach, and the doctors gave her only six months to live. Rene spoke to her aunt's physician, Dr. R.O. Fisher, told him about the herb tea, and asked if she could give the tea to her aunt, under his supervision. Upon his consent, she obtained the herbs and proceeded to make the tea for her aunt to drink every day. Her aunt's cancer went into remission, and she lived for 21 years without any recurrence of cancer.

After that successful experience Rene quit the hospital and began curing people privately, using the same mixture of herbs that would become known as Essiac (Rene's last name spelled backwards). Word spread quickly, and soon, the number of patients healed from cancer started to multiply.

When a doctor from the town of Bracebridge in Ontario sent Rene a patient who had cancer of the bowel, Rene cured the patient using the same herbal mixture. As a result of that miraculous cure, the doctor went before the town council and mayor and urged them to give Rene a building where she could treat cancer patients with her natural cancer remedy. The clinic was established soon thereafter, and in a few months' time, it was busy with activity because patients began flocking in from different places. She treated 3 to 600 patients a

week. The only condition required by the city was that she had to provide the treatments free of charge — and there had to be a doctor's diagnosis for every case she treated.

Despite the success stories and undeniable healings accomplished at the clinic, Rene attracted unwanted attention, particular from a Doctor Leonardo, a cancer surgeon from Buffalo, New York, who warned her that the medical profession would never allow her to continue giving free cancer treatments because it threatened doctors' livelihoods. Not long thereafter, a mysterious group of entrepreneurs showed up at Rene's clinic offering her a million dollars for her secret herbal formula. Rene refused to sell the formula because the entrepreneurs would not guarantee that her natural remedy would be made available for free to anyone who needed it.

In 1938, Rene was called before the Legislature to determine the legality of the Essiac remedy. Over 55,000 people had signed a petition to legalize Essiac, but when the matter went before the Legislature, it lost by 3 votes.

Before long, a cancer commission was established to investigate herbal remedies. The majority of Rene's case studies and evidence of hundreds of patients being cured of cancer were rejected, and she was soon forced to shut down her clinic and turn away desperate cancer patients who sought her out when the medical profession could do nothing for them. Rene suffered a nervous breakdown over the investigation and the medical profession's refusal to admit that Essiac was a cure for cancer.

After Rene recovered from the breakdown, she started her health practice again from scratch, brewing the herbal mixture and curing patients in the basement of her house. However, authorities didn't leave her alone, and instead, began harassing her again, arresting her a few times for the most absurd reasons. Nevertheless, the fame of Essiac continued to spread and crossed the border to the United States. Proponents of Essiac, including Dr. Charles Brush, President Kennedy's personal physician and friend, endeavored to study the effects of the non-toxic natural remedy in the treatment of cancer. At some point, Dr. Brush even recommended Essiac to be approved by the FDA as a possible cancer cure.

The medical establishment immediately set up obstacles to prevent this from happening, and eventually, Essiac was not approved by the FDA. Throughout the 5 decades from the 1920s through the 1970s, the response from the medical authorities had always been the same; and they concocted preposterous excuses to reduce the chances of future FDA approval — even at the cost of making themselves look ridiculous.

Some even went as far as to prevent Essiac from being used in the future by doctors, who might eventually give in to a higher calling and medical responsibility. In the state of California, for example, the state legislature declared it a felony for a doctor to use any other than the accepted methods of treatment for cancer—namely, surgery, chemotherapy, and radiation.

After years of her exhausting battle against the medical establishment, Rene withdrew to her home and continued treating patients quietly on a private, one-on-one basis until the day she died in 1978 at the age of 90.