Selenium is an important trace mineral. It is an essential part of antioxidant enzymes that protect the body's cells against damage by free radicals.

The body only needs a small supply of selenium. Studies have shown conclusively that this mineral is a potent cancer fighter. So much so that the FDA (Federal Drug Administration) says, "Selenium may reduce the risk of certain cancers. Some scientific evidence suggests that consumption of selenium may reduce the risk of certain forms of cancer. However, the FDA has determined that this evidence is limited and not conclusive."

Unfortunately, even though our grandparents and perhaps even our parents may have gotten enough selenium through their diet, that is no longer the case. The soil is not as nutrient packed as it was back then. To reduce cancer risk, supplementation with selenium is therefore a must.

A selenium deficiency can lead to hypothyroidism (low thyroid function), cognitive decline, cancer, heart failure, and coronary artery disease (atherosclerosis.) The recommended dietary allowance as set by the United States Food and Nutrition Board is 55 mcg per day. However, other studies show that selenium's anti-cancer properties come into effect at a dosage of at least 200 mcg per day.

Selenium can be found in meats, grains, seafood, and certain nuts such as walnuts and Brazil nuts. Apples are a great source of this mineral.

According to a few studies, selenium may be 50 to 100 times more powerful than any other anti-carcinogen known.

Many forms of selenium available today are virtually worthless. The inorganic forms selenite and selenate are not readily bioavailable. For selenium to be effective, it must be able to be stored in the body's proteins.

The form of selenium which is readily available for the body to use is called selenomethionine.