

records to Dr. Elihu Richter, head of Occupational and Environmental Medicine at Hebrew University-Hadassah School of Medicine, whose research calculates risk assessment of occupational exposure to radiation, including cell phones. Dr. Richter offered a similar assessment: “The weight of evidence suggests it is more likely than not that there is a cause/effect relationship between [Alan’s] heavy cell phone use and his brain tumor. The fact that a brain tumor appeared after a 10-year latent period and on the right side, where he held the phone, is consistent with the emerging body of knowledge on exposure, latency, and laterality of cell phone use.”

What was I to do with this alarming information? As a Jew I considered it my sacred duty to inform others how responsible cell phone use might possibly spare them and their loved ones from the suffering my family had endured. To save a life, our tradition teaches, is to save the world.

But with a sick husband, did I have the energy to take on this struggle? And if I did, exactly how far was I prepared to go?

Shortly thereafter, during a Shabbat service at my congregation, Temple Sinai in Oakland, I read these words in *Mishkan T’filah—A Reform Siddur*:

*When justice burns within us like a flaming fire,
When love evokes willing sacrifice from us,
When, to the last full measure of selfless devotion,
we demonstrate our belief in the ultimate triumph of
truth and righteousness,*

*Then Your goodness enters our lives and we can
begin to change the world.*

*And then You live in our hearts, and we, through
righteousness, behold our truth.*

My decision was made. I couldn’t stand idly by in the face of what I saw as an injustice, for “Who can protest and does not is an accomplice of the act” (Talmud Bavli Tractate Shabbat 54b).



SEVERAL INTERNATIONAL SCIENTISTS AND doctors who studied the relationship between cell phones and cancer personally embraced and supported our family. Dr. Richter of Israel, for example, spent hours on the phone with me explaining how he could help Alan regain some of his cognitive, physical, and behavioral abilities. Dr. Devra Davis, an epidemiologist and cancer researcher who founded the Environmental Health Trust and authored the book *Disconnect* on the cell phone controversy, called me often to meditate on the *Sh’ma* and pray together. My new friends had become a blessing.

Cell phone: Seamartini / veer.com



ON SEPTEMBER 24, 2008, I TESTIFIED BEFORE a congressional committee in Washington, DC. My public activism had begun.

After telling the lawmakers what had happened to Alan, I urged them to “demand that warnings about cell phone usage and the radiation they emit be stated on every cell phone. By doing so you will protect our most precious resource of all—human life.”

Wanting to learn more, in 2009 I attended an Environmental Health Trust Expert Conference on cell phones and health. Experts from 10 nations reported on their scientific findings. Martin Blank, Ph.D., professor of Physiology and Cellular Biophysics at Columbia University, College of Physicians and Surgeons, reported that microwave radiation has the potential of changing bonds in DNA strands which could lead to cancer. Dr. Leif Salford, chairman of the Department of Neurosurgery, Lund University, Sweden, reported a positive correlation between gliomas and mobile-phone exposure, which he attributed to DNA damage caused by cell phone radiation occurring at non-thermal levels. Dr. Salford’s finding called into question the belief widely held among scientists that cell phone radiation could not cause cancer because it is non-thermal.

Yet Dr. Michael Thun, vice president of the American Cancer Society, reported that when looking at all the studies to date, the data on brain tumor risk had been reassuring. A heated discussion ensued. Dr. Siegal Sadetzki, an Israeli epidemiologist and physician who drafted the Israeli government’s official warning on cell phones, asked Dr. Thun in astonishment, “How can you say such a thing?” Another attendee commented, “[It’s] tobacco all over again, only worse.”



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ELLEN MARKS' RECOMMENDED

CELL PHONE PRECAUTIONS

Given the potential dangers of improper long-term cell phone use, the following steps can limit your radiation exposure:

- Read the fine-print advisories in your user guide.
- Use your cell phone less and a corded landline more often.
- Keep a cell phone in “on” mode away from your head or body.
- Do not sleep with a cell phone near your head (i.e., under your pillow or on a nightstand).
- Avoid cell phone use in elevators, moving vehicles, and rural areas, as the weaker the signal the stronger the radiation emitted.
- Use a plastic tubed headset or speakerphone.
- Keep a cell phone in “on” mode away from infants and children.
- Do not allow children to use a cell phone, except in an emergency.
- Text often (but not while driving).