



Eat fruits and vegetables

Eating vegetables may slightly reduce the risk of some breast cancers. Eating fruits may also help reduce breast cancer risk.

Carotenoids are natural orange-red food pigments found in fruits and vegetables (like melons, carrots, sweet potatoes and squash).

Women with higher blood levels of carotenoids have a decreased risk of breast cancer compared to women with lower levels.

Smoking

Smoking increases the risk of many types of cancer (including lung, kidney and pancreatic).

Findings on a possible link to breast cancer remain mixed, but there's growing evidence smoking may slightly increase the risk of breast cancer.

Stopping or never starting smoking is one of the best things you can do for your health. If you smoke, there are health benefits of quitting at any age.

A note about emotional health

While emotional health does not impact breast cancer risk, taking care of yourself and having a sense of happiness and well-being are important.

- Keep a positive attitude.
- Do things that make you happy and bring balance to your life.
- Be in touch with “your spiritual self” through meditation or prayer. It may help you gain inner peace.



Related educational resources:

- [Breast Cancer 101 videos](#) (specifically the following):
 - Finding a Healthy Balance
 - Diet and Nutrition
 - Exercise (Physical activity)
 - Alcohol
 - Tobacco
- [Breast Cancer & Risk](#)

For more information, visit komen.org or call Susan G. Komen's breast care helpline at 1-877 GO KOMEN (1-877-465-6636) Monday through Friday, 9 AM to 10 PM ET.



Healthy Living and Breast Cancer



Make Healthy Lifestyle Choices

Being overweight or obese affects the risk of breast cancer differently for pre- and postmenopausal women. Many studies link body weight to breast cancer risk.

1. Maintain a healthy weight

- Being overweight increases the risk of breast cancer after menopause.
- Gaining weight as an adult increases the risk of breast cancer.
- Losing weight after menopause may help lower the risk of breast cancer.

2. Add exercise to your routine

Women who get regular exercise (physical activity) have a lower risk of breast cancer than women who are not active. (This benefit is seen most clearly in women after menopause.)

- You don't need an intense exercise routine to get a benefit. Activity equal to walking 30 minutes a day may lower breast cancer risk.



Did you know some healthy lifestyle choices may lower your risk of getting breast cancer?

Before you start an exercise program, see a doctor if you:

- Have been inactive for a long time
- Are overweight
- Have a high risk of heart disease
- Have a high risk of or have other chronic health problems

If you are already physically active, keep up the good work!

3. Limit alcohol intake

Drinking alcohol increases the risk of breast cancer.

- One study found women who had 2-3 alcoholic drinks per day had a 20 percent higher risk of breast cancer compared to women who didn't drink alcohol.
- If you drink alcohol, drink less than 1 drink a day.

4. Limit menopausal hormones

Menopausal hormone therapy (MHT) is approved for the short-term relief of menopausal symptoms.

The main types of MHT are:

- Estrogen plus progestin
- Estrogen alone

Estrogen plus progestin increases the risk of both developing and dying from breast cancer.

- Once MHT is stopped, this risk starts to decline. After about 5-10 years, the risk returns to that of a woman who has never used MHT.
- Some studies suggest estrogen alone increases the risk of breast cancer. However, one large study found a decreased risk.

Talk to your doctor about the risks and benefits of MHT.

5. Breastfeed, if you can

- Breastfeeding protects against breast cancer, especially in premenopausal women.
- It may be especially good at lowering the risk of estrogen receptor-negative (including triple negative) breast cancers.