



# Reduce Breast Cancer Risk

## Follow These Eight Simple Tips

by Shawna Page

At the turn of the previous century, one in ninety women were diagnosed with breast cancer. Today it's one in eight. Despite advances in research and treatment, breast cancer continues to take a significant toll on women in our country. Many risk factors for breast cancer can't be changed: family history, the age at which you get your first period, and the age at which you go through menopause.

However, risk can be increased or decreased based on the lifestyle choices you make. Fortunately, there are ways to reduce your risk that are entirely within your control.

**1. Maintain A Healthy Weight:** The amount of weight a woman gains after age 18 is a strong indicator of breast cancer risk, especially after menopause. Older women who gained 20-30 pounds after high school had 40 percent increased risk compared to those women who kept their weight down. Another report stated that the risk doubled if a woman gained over 70 pounds. This is due, in part, to the fact that many breast tumors thrive on estrogen and body fat stores estrogen. Don't give cancer a good place to hide.

**2. Eat Plenty Of Cruciferous**

**Vegetables:** Indole-3-Carbinol (I3C) is a naturally occurring phytonutrient (plant based) found in vegetables like broccoli, kale, cabbage and cauliflower. I3C helps protect breast tissue by stimulating your body's natural detoxifying enzymes. This aids the body in safely releasing excess estrogen.

**3. Rethink Hormone Replacement Therapy:**

Current and long-term users of hormone replacement therapy (HRT) have an increased risk of developing breast cancer, according to the Journal of the American Medical Association. HRT was found to raise the number of breast cancers that are ductal and lobular.

**4. Stop Smoking:** Tobacco smoke carries carcinogens, which can accumulate in fluid around the breasts. Active smoking can significantly increase your risk of breast and lung cancers, and passive smoking may also raise your risk. Get help to kick the habit and improve your long-term health. There is increasing evidence to support a link between smoking and breast cancer. It's another good reason to stop smoking.

**5. Watch The Alcohol:** Regular and modest amounts of alcohol can raise

your estrogen levels. Even one drink a day can expose breast tissue to higher hormone levels. Since some breast tumors are estrogen-sensitive, alcohol can increase the risk of cells in that tissue becoming cancerous. Limit your intake to lower your risk.

**6. Get Regular Exercise:** Exercise helps manage weight and decreases the risk of several cancers, including breast cancer.

**7. Breast Self-Exam (BSE):** Self-examination on a routine basis allows you to become familiar with how your breasts normally look and feel. This can help you become aware of any changes that may occur.

**8. Clinical Breast Exam (CBE):** A clinical breast exam is an examination by a healthcare professional, who uses his/her hands to feel for lumps or other changes. Many women have a CBE as part of their regular health check-up. If you are between 40-49 years of age it is recommended that you have a CBE at least every two years.

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