

Online Resources

Your Disease Risk
yourdiseaserisk.wustl.edu

Zuum—Health Tracker
zuum.wustl.edu

8ight Ways to Prevent Cancer
8ightways.org

**Surgeon General—
My Family Health Portrait**
familyhistory.hhs.gov

NIH—Body Mass Index Calculator
tinyurl.com/nhlbibmi

National Cancer Institute
cancer.gov

American Cancer Society
cancer.org

SmokeFree.gov
smokefree.gov



Siteman Cancer Center Locations

Washington University Medical Campus
4921 Parkview Place
St. Louis, MO 63110

St. Charles County
150 Entrance Way
St. Peters, MO 63376

North St. Louis County
11125 Dunn Road, Suite 100
St. Louis, MO 63136

West St. Louis County
10 Barnes West Drive, Physician Office Building, 2
Creve Coeur, MO 63141

South St. Louis County
5225 Midamerica Plaza
St. Louis, MO 63129

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TO PREVENT BREAST CANCER

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Pažnja: Dostupne su vam besplatne usluge jezičke pomoći. Nazovite 314-747-5682 (TTY - Telefon za osobe sa oštećenim govorom ili sluhom: 1-800-735-2966).



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TOPREVENT BREAST CANCER

Breast cancer. Just reading those words can make many women worry. And that's natural. Nearly everyone knows someone touched by the disease.

But there is a lot of good news about breast cancer these days. Treatments keep getting better, and we know more than ever about ways to prevent the disease. These **eight simple steps** can help lower the risk of breast cancer. Not every one applies to every woman, but together they can have a big impact.

1. Keep Weight in Check

It's easy to tune out because it gets said so often, but maintaining a healthy weight is an important goal for everyone. Being overweight can increase the risk of many different cancers, including breast cancer, especially after menopause.

2. Be Physically Active

Exercise is as close to a silver bullet for good health as there is, and women who are physically active for at least 30 minutes a day have a lower risk of breast cancer. Regular exercise is also one of the best ways to help keep weight in check.

3. Eat Your Fruits & Vegetables – and Avoid Too Much Alcohol

A healthy diet can help lower the risk of breast cancer. Try to eat a lot of fruits and vegetables and keep alcohol at moderate levels or lower (a drink a day or under). While moderate drinking can be good for the heart in older adults, even low levels of intake can increase the risk of breast cancer. If you don't drink, don't feel you need to start. If you drink moderately, there's likely no reason to stop. But, if you drink more, you should cut down or quit.

4. Don't Smoke

Smokers and non-smokers alike know how unhealthy smoking is. On top of lowering quality of life and increasing the risk of heart disease, stroke, and at least 15 cancers – including breast cancer – it also causes smelly breath, bad teeth, and wrinkles. Now that's motivation to stay smoke-free or work to get smoke-free.

5. Breastfeed, If Possible

Breastfeeding for a total of one year or more (combined for all children) lowers the risk of breast cancer. It also has great health benefits for the child.

6. Avoid Birth Control Pills, Particularly After Age 35 or If You Smoke

Birth control pills have both risks and benefits. The younger a woman is, the lower the risks are.

While women are taking birth control pills, they have a slightly increased risk of breast cancer. This risk goes away quickly, though, after stopping the pill. The risk of stroke and heart attack is also increased while on the pill – particularly if a woman smokes. However, long-term use can also have important benefits, like lowering the risk of ovarian cancer, colon cancer and uterine cancer – not to mention unwanted pregnancy – so there's also a lot in its favor. If you're very concerned about breast cancer, avoiding birth control pills is one option to lower risk.

7. Avoid Menopausal Hormone Therapy

Menopausal hormone therapy shouldn't be taken long term to prevent chronic diseases, like osteoporosis and heart disease. Studies show it has a mixed effect on health, increasing the risk of some diseases and lowering the risk of others, and both estrogen-only hormones and estrogen-plus-progestin hormones increase the risk of breast cancer.

If women do take menopausal hormone therapy, it should be for the shortest time possible. The best person to talk to about the risks and benefits of menopausal hormone therapy is your doctor.

8. Tamoxifen and Raloxifene for Women at High Risk

Although not commonly thought of as a "healthy behavior," taking the prescription drugs tamoxifen and raloxifene can significantly lower the risk of breast cancer in woman at high risk of the disease. Approved by the FDA for breast cancer prevention, these powerful drugs can have side effects, so they aren't right for everyone. If you think you're at high risk, talk to your doctor to see if tamoxifen or raloxifene may be right for you.

for high-risk women



Don't Forget Screening

Despite some controversy, studies show that breast cancer screening with mammography saves lives. It doesn't help prevent cancer, but it can help find cancer early when it's most treatable. For most women, regular mammograms can begin at age 40, but specific recommendations vary by age and risk.

IF YOU ARE AGE 40 – 44:

You can choose to begin yearly mammograms. It is important to talk to a doctor about the risk and benefits of mammograms at these ages.

If you are age 45 – 54:

Mammograms are recommended every year.

If you are age 55 or over:

Mammograms are recommended every other year. You can choose to continue to have them every year.

Clinical breast exams and self-exams are not recommended. But you should be familiar with your breasts and tell a health care provider right away if you notice any changes in how your breasts look or feel.

START HEALTHY BEHAVIORS EARLY



It's almost never too early to get started with a healthy lifestyle, and this seems especially so when it comes to breast cancer. Growing evidence shows that the youth and young adult years are key times for helping prevent breast cancer later in life. By some estimates, healthy behaviors started in youth and continued throughout life could prevent 50 percent or more of all breast cancers.

Healthy habits for youth and young adults (and their parents) to focus on, include: eating a lot of plant-based foods, staying at a healthy weight, being active, and avoiding tobacco and alcohol.

FIND OUT YOUR FAMILY HISTORY



Women with a strong family history of cancer can take special steps to lower or manage their risk. You may be at high risk of breast cancer if you have a mother or sister who developed breast or ovarian cancer (especially at an early age) or if you have multiple family members (including males) who developed breast, ovarian or prostate cancer. A doctor or genetic counselor can help you understand your family history of the disease.

Other Important Risk Factors for Breast Cancer

Unfortunately, there are also a number of important breast cancer risk factors that women have no control over. Knowing which ones apply to you can help you understand your risk and do what you can to lower it. If you feel you're at high risk, talk to a doctor or other health professional. These can increase a woman's breast cancer risk:

- Older age, especially 60 years or over
- Family history of breast cancer
- First menstrual period (menarche) before age 12
- Menopause at age 55 or over
- First childbirth after age 35
- No children
- Tall height (5'8" or taller)
- Dense breasts
- History of benign breast disease (like atypical hyperplasia)

Know Your Risk. Change Your Future

Visit yourdiseaserisk.wustl.edu and, with just a few clicks, get a personal estimate of your breast cancer risk and custom prevention tips.

