



8IGHTWAYS[®]

TO PREVENT **BREAST** CANCER



HEALING
MIND, BODY,
& SPIRIT

8IGHT WAYS[®]

TOPREVENT BREAST CANCER

We know more than ever about ways to prevent breast cancer. And breast cancer is treatable, even though it is the third leading cause of cancer death for American Indian/Alaska Native women. Healthy lifestyle choices and better treatment can improve outcomes.

These **eight simple steps** can help lower the risk of breast cancer. Not every step applies to every woman, but together they can have a big impact.

1 **Maintain a Healthy Weight**

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**

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 Alcohol**

A healthy diet can help lower the risk of breast cancer. Try to eat a lot of fruits and vegetables. Drinking alcohol can up the risk of breast cancer even at low levels. If you drink, think about cutting down or quitting.

4 **Don't Smoke**

Tobacco has a traditional, spiritual and medicinal role in Native cultures. However, smokers and non-smokers alike know how unhealthy smoking is. On top of lowering quality of life and increasing the risk of breast cancer—it also puts the hearts and lungs of your children, family and friends at risk.

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 after stopping the pill. Long-term birth control pill use can also have important benefits, like lowering the risk of ovarian cancer, colon cancer and uterine cancer—not to mention unwanted pregnancy. If you're concerned about breast cancer, avoiding birth control pills is one option to lower risk.

7 **Avoid Post-Menopausal Hormones**

Studies show that post-menopausal hormones have a mixed effect on health, increasing the risk of some diseases and lowering the risk of others. Both estrogen-only hormones and estrogen-plus-progestin hormones increase the risk of breast cancer.

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

8 **Women at High Risk, Talk to Your Doctor Early**

Although not commonly thought of as a “healthy behavior,” taking prescription 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, they 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

Studies show that breast cancer screening with mammography saves lives. It doesn't prevent cancer, but it can find cancer early when it's most treatable. Regular mammograms can begin at age 40, but specific recommendations vary by age and risk.

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.

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.

START HEALTHY BEHAVIORS EARLY



It's never too early to get started with a healthy lifestyle, especially when it comes to breast cancer. Growing evidence shows that the younger years are key times for helping to 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 cancers.

Healthy habits for youth and young adults (and their parents) 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

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.



Online Resources

Your Disease Risk
yourdiseaserisk.wustl.edu

Zuum—Health Tracker
zuum.wustl.edu

8 Ways to Prevent Cancer
the8ways.org

Susan G. Komen
komen.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

American Indian Cancer Foundation
americanindiancancer.org



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 200
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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