



Lifestyle tips to lower your risk of breast cancer

Every year in the United States, approximately 245,000 women are diagnosed with breast cancer. Breast cancer occurs when cells in the breast grow out of control. There are many factors that can influence your chances of getting breast cancer. Some factors you cannot change, such as your family history and age.

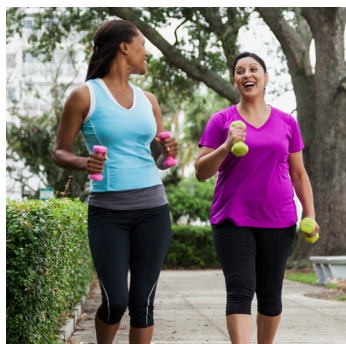
What you can change is your lifestyle. Making small adaptations and taking care of your health will lower your risk of developing breast cancer and can help your chances of survival if you do get it.

Get regular mammograms

Starting at age 40, most women should have annual mammograms. This can vary depending on your personal risk factors, so discuss the right time with your provider. A mammogram is an X-ray of the breast and is one of the best tools providers have to find breast cancer early.

Maintain a healthy weight

Having an increased body weight or gaining weight as an adult has been linked to a higher risk of developing breast cancer. Staying at a healthy weight throughout the course of your life will help lower your risk. You can maintain your weight by balancing your food intake and diet with the amount of physical activity you get. Talk to your provider if you have concerns about your weight.



Exercise regularly

There are countless studies that show the benefits of routine exercise for the body. Moderate to vigorous activity is linked to a lower risk of breast cancer. Make sure you're exercising several times throughout the week to help lower your breast cancer risk. Consider finding a friend to exercise with for inspiration, and together you can build healthy lifestyles.

Limit alcohol consumption

Even small amounts of alcohol have been shown to increase the risk of breast cancer. It's best to limit your intake. The American Cancer Society advises women to have no more than one alcoholic drink per day.

Breastfeed your children, if possible

If you have children and can breastfeed, you're recommended to do so. Breastfeeding for at least several months may help reduce your risk of developing breast cancer. Those who have a history of breastfeeding have been shown to have reduced rates of breast cancer compared to those who have never breastfed.



Learn about your family history

If there's a history of breast cancer in your family, discuss it with your provider. There are some genes that increase the risk for breast cancer. Your provider can advise you on further testing and preventive measures, including early detection signs, medications to lower your risk and preventive surgery.

Analyzing your lifestyle and making adaptations is one of the best ways to lower your risk of developing breast cancer. Talk to your provider for more specific lifestyle changes you can make to reduce your risk.