
Recommendations On How To Reduce Risk Of Having Breast Cancer

Breast cancer now affects around 55,000 women and 300 men in the UK each year, however, it rarely develops in healthy breasts. The following recommendations offer ways to keep your breasts healthy and may help reduce your risk for breast cancer.

1. Don't Smoke - If you have been smoking cigarettes since you were a teenager, you have a 70% risk of getting breast cancer. Women are also more susceptible to cancer from secondary or passive smoke.
2. Limit Alcohol Consumption - Consuming more than one unit of alcohol daily is toxic to the liver. If the liver is not functioning optimally, it will be unable to break down the female hormone, oestrogen, sufficiently, allowing higher levels to circulate in the blood. Most breast cancers are oestrogen-dependent so it's important not to have too much in circulation.
3. Get Active - Not doing enough exercise or activity each day prevents the lymph moving around the lymphatic system. This is our garbage disposal system which deals with toxins coming into the body and helps to move them out. We need to move our body for the system to work. A study published in December 2011 estimated that more than 3% of breast cancers in women in the UK were linked to less than two and a half hours of physical activity a week.
4. Maintain a Normal Weight - If you are overweight or obese, you have more fat cells and these produce and store oestrogen. Therefore, the more fat cells you have, the higher your level of oestrogen. If you are more than seven kilograms overweight, it is thought your breast cancer risk is higher than that of a woman who smokes.
5. Get Sufficient Sleep - Too little sleep weakens the immune system. A study in Japan, showed a 62% increased risk of breast cancer in women who slept for six hours or less each night. If there is any form of artificial light in the room from a night light, street light or electric alarm clock, it can affect melatonin (sleep hormone) production, increasing breast cancer risk. Blue light from screens (mobile phone, computer, tablet etc) before bedtime also interferes with melatonin.
6. Reduce Exposure to Oestrogen Mimics - These are chemicals which mimic oestrogen, sometimes called xeno-oestrogens or foreign oestrogens. These make the oestrogen receptors in your cells react to them as if they were the real hormone. These chemicals are found in toiletries, cosmetics, artificial fragrances, household cleaning products, pesticides, PVC cling film and plastic containers. Watch out for any chemical ending in paraben, triclosan, or which contains an "eth" on toiletry labels. Bisphenol A (BPA) is another oestrogen mimic found in white can liners and plastic bottles.
7. Reduce Exposure to Radiation, Electro Magnetic Fields and Microwaves - Radiation is known to cause normal cells mutate. A study published in December 2011, estimated that around 1% of breast cancers in women in the UK were linked to radiation exposure. This comes from radio frequencies which are used in wireless technology such as mobilephones and phone masts, DECT cordless phones, WiFi appliances, Bluetooth equipment, Microwave ovens and Xrays. Never place your mobile phone in your bra. At night, if you have your mobile by your bed, turn it to flight mode.
8. Manage Stress - It's impossible to avoid stress in our lives but there are ways to

manage it. Stress can affect the immune system, which is there to protect us from cancer. Doing things which can relieve stress may help, such as relaxing in a bath or listening to soothing music, watching a funny film, exercise, dancing, or practising mindfulness or yoga.

9. Eat a Healthy Diet - Eat a wide variety of fruits and vegetables – the more rainbow colours the better. These are full of antioxidants which protect against cancer. Eat nuts and seeds – these are little power houses of nutrients which include essential fatty acids that reduce inflammation in the body. Eat a small amount of meat and fish to provide iron, vitamin B12 and a good source of protein.

Go easy on processed foods high in table salt, white sugar which feeds cancer cells, starchy carbs which turn into sugar in the blood, and trans fats. Avoid all artificial sweeteners, flavourings or preservatives – they can cause cancer.

Keep dairy consumption to a minimum especially if you have had breast cancer or there is a history in the family. The hormones in the milk include oestrogen which can feed a cancer. Take a daily multivitamin and mineral supplement to make up the shortfall of nutrients in today's food; an omega 3 supplement from fish or plant oils to reduce inflammation; and a probiotic formula, especially if you have ever taken antibiotics. It's been found that the more prescriptions of antibiotics a woman has, the higher her risk of breast cancer.

Specific nutrients that protect the breasts are vitamin C, vitamin D, selenium, zinc and iodine. It is estimated that breast cancer risk could be cut by 50% with sufficient vitamin D.

10. Wear a Correct-Sized Bra - If your bra is too tight, it can constrict the flow of lymph in the lymphatic system in the breasts, allowing toxins to back up. A study in the US in the early '90s with 5000 women found that one in seven who wore a bra for more than 12 hours, and three out of four (75%) who wore a bra for 24 hours developed breast cancer.
11. Become Breast Aware - The majority of breast lumps are found by the woman herself, so the more familiar you are with how your breasts look and feel, the more likely it will be that you will notice a lump or change early on. A breast check should include both a visual inspection and a manual examination. If any abnormality is found, you should consult your doctor.