



Did you know some healthy lifestyle choices are linked to a lower risk of breast cancer?

## Make Healthy Lifestyle Choices

### 1. Maintain a healthy weight

Being overweight or obese affects the risk of breast cancer differently for pre-and postmenopausal women. Many studies link body weight to breast cancer risk.

- Women who are overweight or obese before menopause have a decreased risk of breast cancer.
- Women who are overweight or obese after menopause have an increased risk of breast cancer.
- Women who gain weight as an adult have an increased risk of breast cancer before and after menopause.
- Women who lose weight after menopause may have a decreased risk of breast cancer.

Although being overweight or obese is linked to a lower risk of breast cancer before menopause, weight gain should be avoided because any weight gained before menopause may be carried into the postmenopausal years, and most breast cancers occur after menopause.

### 2. Make exercise a part of your routine

Women who get regular exercise (physical activity) have a lower risk of breast cancer than women who are not active. This benefit is seen most clearly in women after menopause.

It's not just intense exercise that's linked to a decreased risk of breast cancer. Women who get activity equal to walking 30 minutes a day have a lower risk than women who aren't active. And remember, any amount of movement is beneficial for your health.

Before starting an exercise routine, see a doctor if you:

- Have been inactive for a long time
- Are overweight
- Have a high risk of heart disease
- Have been diagnosed with or have a high risk of chronic health problems

If you're already active, keep up the good work!

### 3. Limit alcohol intake

Women who drink alcohol have an increased risk of breast cancer.

- One study found women who had 2-3 alcoholic drinks a day had a 20% higher risk of breast cancer than women who didn't drink alcohol.
- It's best not to drink alcohol. If you choose to drink alcohol, drink less than 1 drink a day.

### 4. Limit menopausal hormone therapy (MHT)

MHT is approved for the short-term relief of hot flashes and other menopausal symptoms.

The main types of MHT are:

- Estrogen plus progestin
- Estrogen alone

Taking MHT with estrogen plus progestin increases the risk of breast cancer.

- Once MHT is stopped, this risk starts to decline. After about 5-10 years, the risk returns to that of a woman who has never used MHT.
- Taking MHT with estrogen alone for 10 years or more may increase the risk of breast cancer.

Talk to your doctor about the risks and benefits of MHT.

### 5. Breastfeed if you can

- Women who breastfeed have a lower risk of breast cancer than women who don't breastfeed, especially before menopause.
- The longer a woman breastfeeds in her lifetime, the lower her risk may be.

# HEALTHY LIVING AND BREAST CANCER RISK

## Resources

### Susan G. Komen®

1-877 GO KOMEN

(1-877-465-6636)

[komen.org](https://www.komen.org)

## Related educational resources:

- [Breast Cancer 101 videos](#) (specifically the following):
  - Finding a Healthy Balance
  - Diet and Nutrition
  - Exercise (Physical activity)
  - Alcohol
  - Tobacco
  - Bone Health
- [Breast Cancer Risk Factors](#)



## Eat fruits and vegetables

Eating fruits may be linked to a lower risk of breast cancer. And eating vegetables may be linked to a lower risk of some breast cancers.

Carotenoids are natural orange-red food pigments found in fruits and vegetables (such as carrots, tomatoes and sweet potatoes).

Women with higher blood levels of carotenoids have a decreased risk of breast cancer compared to women with lower levels. Fruits and vegetables are better sources of carotenoids over supplements, as supplements may have some health risks.

## Don't Smoke

Women who smoke for many years may have a slightly increased risk of breast cancer.

Stopping or never starting smoking is one of the best things you can do for your health. If you smoke, there are health benefits to quitting at any age.

## A note about emotional health

Taking care of yourself and having a sense of happiness and well-being is an important part of your health.

Practice gratitude by reflecting on the things you are grateful for and expressing them in a journal or letter.

- Do things that make you happy and bring balance to your life.
- If you are spiritual, meditate or pray. It may help you gain inner peace.
- Consider finding [social support](#), it can help you emotionally and physically.

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