

Top Tips to Decrease Breast Cancer Risk Naturally

In honor of the hundreds of thousands of women, mothers, daughters, sisters, wives... who have been diagnosed with breast cancer, the Amscan Wellness Program wanted to share prevention strategies and why we so strongly believe in a holistic approach and that we need a stronger message of prevention.



A holistic approach to cancer prevention is based in the fundamental understanding that the body has an incredible ability to heal itself. When our internal systems are functioning optimally we are healthy, when they begin to break down, it creates the foundation for degenerative disease to develop. With respect to breast cancer there are very specific diet and lifestyle factors that are known to reduce our risk.

No one is perfect. We all go through phases where we drink too much coffee and eat fewer vegetables than we know we should, but it's about doing the best that you can to incorporate the following on a consistent basis:

- Limit intake of alcohol significantly. There is a significant correlation between alcohol consumption and breast cancer, even 1 drink every other day has been shown to increase your risk. Limit alcohol to 1 or 2 drinks per week.
- Choose only organic meats and dairy, as it contains fewer hormones than commercially processed meat or dairy. Grass fed/grass finished animals are always best. Get plenty of high-quality animal-based omega-3 fats. Omega-3 deficiency is a common underlying factor for cancer.
- Decrease your exposure to toxic chemicals wherever possible - including detergents, household cleaners and personal care items (for example, switch to organic tampons!).
- Radically reduce your intake of sugar and processed/artificial foods wherever possible, just make sure you are choosing foods with high quality ingredients.
- Exercise regularly - movement helps your lymphatic system detoxify your body of toxins and creates a healthy hormonal response. This includes brisk walks, jogging, exercise classes, weight training, yoga, etc. Exercise also helps you cope with and decrease stress, a major risk factor of many illnesses.
- Optimize your vitamin D level. Safe (unprotected) sun exposure is the most effective way to increase your vitamin D levels.
- If you have children, breastfeed exclusively for up to six months. Research shows this will reduce your breast cancer risk.
- Enjoy something green every day. We are bombarded with acid-producing factors like meats, alcohol, coffee, stress, travel, etc., but an alkaline environment is vital to a healthy body and dark leafy greens will help. In fact, eating plenty of vegetables each day will, too. If you don't have much time in your schedule, try blending greens in the morning into a smoothie or get a high quality green powder from the health store.
- Work with a holistic practitioner to monitor your hormone levels on a regular basis. This is very important to ensure your estrogen levels are in check which can effect your fertility as well as your cancer risk. These days, estrogen is abundant everywhere – in meat, dairy, plastic bottles, furniture, cosmetics, clothes, even in the paper receipts we receive at stores.
- Talk to your doctor about thermography. Thermography is essentially a photograph of the heat produced

by the body. It is a wonderful tool for assessing physiological changes associated with fibrocystic breast disease, mastitis, mammary dysplasia and even cancer (or cancer risk). Cancer tissue is more metabolically active can be seen in its early stages – up to 10 years before a tumor is visible on a mammogram.

- Get proper sleep, both in terms of enough sleep and sleeping between certain hours. Ideal hours for sleep are between 10pm and 6am. Working against your biology by staying awake when you should ideally be sleeping or vice versa, interferes with hormonal fluctuations.
- Practice self care. Take time for yourself, whether to relax, meditate, exercise or do something that you love. When you nurture your body and spirit, you change the actual physiology and chemistry of your cells which can play a role in disease prevention.

Millions of dollars are spent every year on early detection in the form of breast self exams and mammograms, but not nearly enough money or time is spent talking about the risk factors that increase our chances of developing breast cancer and how to prevent it. The medical community now acknowledges that over 70% of degenerative disease (this includes cancer) is diet and lifestyle related, and yet when referencing the literature on breast cancer, this fact is merely listed under “other potential causes”.

For example, most women know about scheduling an annual mammogram, yet few are aware of the strong link between alcohol consumption and their risk of breast cancer. ***Detection is NOT the same as prevention.*** We need to do more to become aware of lifestyle risk factors so that we can have a conversation focused on staying healthy.

While cancer continues to remain a mystery in many ways, and there are numerous contributing factors, there is now a great deal of research that points to diet and lifestyle as major risk factors for this disease. We hope that by sharing our holistic approach, you feel inspired and empowered to take control of your health and spread the message of prevention, live by example and remind the women you love to take care of themselves and their health.