



Quick Quiz

1. True or false: If you have multiple members in your family with a history of breast cancer or ovarian cancer, you have an increased risk for breast cancer.
2. True or false: Having excess body weight can increase your risk of breast cancer.
3. True or false: Men can develop breast cancer too.

Answers: All are true statements.

What is breast cancer?

Breast cancer is a cancer that begins in the breast. It can be in one or both breasts. The breast is an organ that is on the upper ribs and chest muscles. It is mostly made of glands, ducts and fatty tissue. For females, the breast is a source and storage site of breast milk for newborns. Breast cancer is prevalent in both men and women, with a greater incidence in women. Breast cancer is a disease of cells which results in overgrowth of abnormal tissue. The most common type of breast cancer is ductal carcinoma, which begins in the glands. Breast cancer is of concern, as it has the potential to spread to other areas of the body.

How common is breast cancer?

Breast cancer affects both women and men. Nearly one in eight women is at risk for developing breast cancer in their lifetime. As for men, one in 833 men is at risk for developing breast cancer. The incidence has increased by 0.5%. Breast cancer occurs in middle-aged and older men and women. The median age of breast cancer diagnosis is 62 for women and 68 for men.

Do you have any of these risk factors:	Yes	No
Have you smoked, or do you currently smoke cigarettes?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you been exposed to radiation therapy?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are you overweight or obese?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are you sedentary most days?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you consume more than one alcoholic drink a day as a woman or more than two drinks a day as a man?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you consume red meat, highly processed foods, sugar and saturated fat regularly or in excess?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other risk factors	Yes	No
Are you over the age of 50?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have a mother, sister or daughter (a first-degree relative), or multiple family members on either the mother's or father's side of the family, who have been diagnosed with breast or ovarian cancer?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you say "yes" to any of the above, let your health-care provider know.



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How can I lower my risk?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention cites that breast cancer screening cannot prevent breast cancer; however, it can detect it at an earlier stage when it is easier to treat. Let your healthcare provider know of any changes in your breasts.

Achieve a healthy weight and maintain that weight. Excess body weight is associated with an increased risk of breast cancer. For women who are post-menopausal, weight maintenance is especially important. In post-menopausal women, most estrogen is produced in fat tissue. Having excess fat tissue increases estrogen levels in the body, raising your risk for breast cancer.

Weight gain as an adult adds to the risk for breast cancer. Find ways to increase your physical activity: go for a brisk walk after meals, join a gym, avoid time spent sitting. Be mindful of sedentary behaviors such as watching TV and other screen-based activities. Make a plan to get moving. The American Cancer Society Guideline for Diet and Physical Activity recommends 2.5 to 5 hours of moderate intensity activity per week.

Having a healthy eating pattern can reduce your risk of breast cancer. Be sure to get a variety of fruits and vegetables, including fiber-rich legumes such as beans and peas. Seek out whole-grain food items and avoid refined grain products. Limit your consumption of red meat, especially highly processed meats. Eating a balanced diet will help you maintain a healthy weight and ensure you are getting the nutrients and antioxidants your body needs.

Avoid alcohol. Studies show an increased risk for breast cancer with increased alcohol consumption. Alcohol consumption should be limited to one alcoholic drink per day for women and no more than two per day for men. One drink is equal to 12 ounces of regular beer, 5 ounces of wine, or 1.5 ounces of 80-proof liquor.

Follow these breast cancer prevention recommendations:

- Be physically active regularly.
- Achieve and maintain a healthy weight.
- Eat at least 2½ to 3 cups of vegetables and 2 cups of fruit every day. Be sure to eat a variety of vegetables and fruit. Try eating various colors, including leafy greens, red, orange and yellow vegetables.
- Choose to eat 100% whole grain foods. Read bread, cereal and rice labels.
- Limit processed meat. Meats such as bacon and sausage are highly processed. Choose a variety of protein foods from plants and animal sources.
- Limit saturated fat and incorporate “good fats,” also known as polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats. Swap butter for olive oil or canola oil. Incorporate nuts or natural nut butters, avocados and olives into your diet.

For more information, see www.cdc.gov/cancer.



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