

## Breast Cancer Chronicles

**Breast Cancer: How to Reduce the Risk** Posted Wed, Oct 01, 2008, 10:00 am PDT

There are several lifestyle changes we can adopt that can directly affect our **risk of getting breast cancer** — and I'm a firm believer in doing everything we possibly can to reduce that risk.

Here is a list of actions you can start taking today to help your breasts live a healthier life and remain attached to you!

- **Exercise 3 times a week.** This doesn't mean buying a gym membership or training to be the next Olympic running champ. Power walking around your neighborhood every other day will do it — for 1 hour, 3 times a week. Strut your stuff and reduce your risk. And why not recruit a friend to join you?
- **Stick to a low-fat diet.** This doesn't mean giving up all sweets and treats, either. Just watch how much of them you eat and don't partake every day. This, along with exercise (see above) will keep your weight within the desired range (which, by the way, is a crucial risk-reducer). Less weight means less body fat and, since we store estrogen in body fat, that's less estrogen for us to be hauling around. This is a brilliant step to take because estrogen is a known promoter and nourisher of breast cancer cells, as well as of cells that are about to mutate into cancerous ones.
- **Stop smoking.** Quit if you can, and steer clear of secondhand smoke, too. Believe it or not, inhaling cigarette smoke increases the estrogen levels in your bloodstream. Go figure. And research has now proven that secondhand smoke can be just as damaging to our bodies as lighting up the cancer sticks ourselves. The American Cancer Society has reported that if all tobacco products were banished today, then 80 percent of all cancers would vanish as well. Wow.
- **Limit your alcohol intake.** Alcohol too can increase your risk. Are you a social drinker? That's fine, but limit yourself to one alcoholic beverage a day or less (for a woman, that amounts to 12 oz. of beer, 6 oz. of wine, or 1 oz. of the hard stuff). Doesn't matter what kind of liquor we're talking about, either — beer, wine, or spirits, it's all the same. Say "No thanks" after one drink.

This list, you'll notice, is short but sweet. But please do pay attention to these more healthy behaviors because they are the 4 pillars of breast cancer prevention.