

Guide to Reduce Risk of Breast Cancer

The exact cause of cancer is not completely understood; however, research shows by making these lifestyle changes, you can take proactive steps to lower your risk of breast cancer. If you have specific concerns or a family history of breast cancer, it's a good idea to discuss personalized strategies with your healthcare provider.

Here are some of the ways you CAN lower your risk.

- **Get Screened**

Stay up to date with mammograms and clinical breast exams. Early detection can lead to better outcomes.

- **Maintain a Healthy Weight**

Being overweight or obese, especially after menopause, can increase your risk.

- **Adopt Healthy Eating Habits**

A diet rich in fruits, vegetables, beans, whole grains, and healthy fats can contribute to overall health and may help reduce cancer risk.

- **Stay Physically Active**

Regular physical activity can help lower your risk. Aim for at least 150 minutes of activity each week.

- **Limit Alcohol Consumption**

Studies show that alcohol intake is linked to an increased risk of breast cancer.

- **Avoid Tobacco**

While the link between smoking and breast cancer is still being studied, avoiding tobacco can reduce your risk of many cancers.

- **Consider Hormone Therapy Carefully**

If you're using hormone replacement therapy (HRT) during menopause, discuss the risks with your doctor. Some combinations of hormones can increase breast cancer risk.



Intermountain Health is here to support you in your journey to better health. If you have questions about your breast health or screenings, please feel free to contact an Intermountain Health Breast Care Center near you.

Breaking it down

Nutrition and Weight

- Higher body weight, particularly in post-menopausal women, raises cancer risk. This is because fat tissue produces estrogen, which can lead to elevated estrogen levels associated with certain breast cancers. Consult your provider for a personalized weight-management plan.
- Eat mostly plant-based, high fiber foods. Aim for two-thirds of your plate to be plant-based.
 1. Incorporate different colored fruits and vegetables to maximize benefits. Choose bread, cereal and pasta made from whole grains.
 2. Limit red meat to no more than twice a week. Avoid processed meats. Choose low-fat options such as fish, poultry, beans, and low-fat dairy products.
 3. Limit your sugar intake, be mindful of hidden sugars in processed foods like white bread or pasta.

Alcohol and Tobacco

- There is strong evidence that alcohol increases the risk of breast cancer. If you choose to drink, it is recommended that you have no more than 3 drinks per week. A “drink” is equal to 5 oz of wine, 12 oz of beer or seltzer, 1.5 oz of hard liquor.
- If you smoke, quit. Smoking tobacco or breathing in another person’s smoke is being recognized as a possible risk factor for certain types of breast cancer. Find support at Colorado QuitLine.org or 1-800-784-8669.

Physical Activity

Engaging in regular physical activity is crucial for reducing the risk of breast cancer. Health experts suggest aiming for at least 150 minutes of exercise each week, incorporating moderate and vigorous activities as able. Here are some examples to get you started:

Moderate Activities

These activities typically raise your heart rate and make you breathe a bit harder, but you can still talk comfortably. Examples include:

- Brisk walking, or easy hiking
- Bicycling on flat terrain
- Pickle ball or doubles tennis
- Dancing or leisurely swimming
- Gardening or light yard work
- Yoga

Vigorous Activities

These activities significantly increase your heart rate and breathing, making it hard to talk without pausing. Examples include:

- Running, jogging, or hiking uphill
- Swimming laps
- Bicycling uphill or at a fast pace
- Cross-country skiing
- Aerobic dancing or high-intensity fitness classes
- Heavy yard work (like digging or chopping wood)