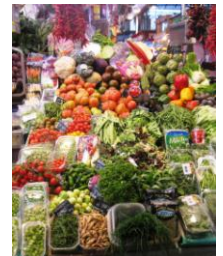


Breast Cancer Care and Prevention: Guidelines for a Healthy Lifestyle

These guidelines may help to prevent breast cancer. They will also help you stay as healthy as possible if you are receiving breast cancer treatment.

Nutrition

- Drink lots of **filtered water**.
- Eat **organic foods** that are not contaminated with pesticides and herbicides.
- Avoid processed foods.
- Eat **fatty fish** such as salmon and sardines 1-3 times/week or take fish oil supplements daily. (See supplement section below). Eat less albacore tuna, shark, swordfish, king mackerel, and tile fish since they can be more contaminated with mercury.
- Eat 5-9 servings of **fruits and vegetables** each day. (The more, the better). Cruciferous vegetables (broccoli, cauliflower, brussels sprouts, cabbage and kale) help prevent cancer. Eat 1-2 servings of these daily if possible.
- Eat an anti-inflammatory, **Mediterranean diet**. This diet avoids harmful fats and increases helpful omega 3 fatty acids (found in ocean fish, walnuts, soybeans, greens, flax seed meal). The Mediterranean diet includes nuts, fresh vegetables and fish. See the following website: <http://www.med.umich.edu/umim/food-pyramid/about.htm> .
- Drink 3 cups of **green tea** daily to help reduce your breast cancer risk.
- Maintain a **healthy body weight**. Keep your Body Mass Index (BMI) at 29 or less.
 - See the following website to calculate your BMI: <http://win.niddk.nih.gov/publications/understanding.htm#bodymass> .
 - Eat smaller portions, which will help you control or lose weight. Don't overeat.
 - Take your own food in a lunchbox. Eat only what you bring. It will help prevent eating unhealthful foods such as high calorie, fast food when you are hungry.
- Drink no more than 1 serving of alcohol per day if you are a woman, 2 if you are a man.
- Eat more **fiber** including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts, seeds.
- Eat 1-3 servings of **soy** food daily. Avoid soy (isoflavone) supplements. Soy foods can help protect against breast cancer.
- Eat 1-2 tablespoons of **flax** seed meal or oil daily to help reduce your breast cancer risk.



<http://creativecommons.org/publicdomain/>

Exercise and movement

- **Exercise** for 30-60 minutes at least 5 days a week. Do exercise that is enjoyable for you. Exercising more than 3 hours per week may decrease your risk for cancer.
 - Combine aerobic activity such as walking with a resistance or strength training program 2-3 times a week.
 - Nordic walking sticks may increase your overall conditioning, while improving posture, balance and core strengthening.
 - Yoga, tai chi, and qigong combine meditation and movement. Benefits include both relaxation and exercise.



UW-Madison
Integrative Medicine

PATIENT HANDOUT

University of Wisconsin Integrative Medicine
www.fammed.wisc.edu/integrative



Breast Cancer Care/Prevention: Guidelines for a Healthy Lifestyle

Supplements

- Get **Vitamin D** from spending time in the sun without sunscreen (if you won't sunburn) or from a supplement. If you live at latitudes farther from the equator, consider getting a blood test (25 hydroxy vitamin D level) in winter to see if you have enough Vitamin D in your body. Take a supplement to keep your level in the mid-normal range (about 50 ng/dL). 1000-2000 IU of Vitamin D3 each day is recommended.
- Take a **multivitamin** daily. (Take one without iron if you are a postmenopausal woman or male.)
- Take **fish oil** each day containing at least 1000 mg of EPA and DHA. If you are vegetarian, you can substitute flax seed oil for fish oil.
- You can take **melatonin** if you have difficulty sleeping. Start with a dose of 3 mg before bedtime. Adjust this dose as needed up to 20 mg at bedtime to help you sleep without causing a hangover the next day. If you are sensitive to melatonin, you may only need 1-2 mg. Do not take melatonin if you have severe depression or bipolar illness. It can cause these conditions to be worse.
 - If you have difficulty falling asleep, take the immediate release form of melatonin.
 - If you have difficulty staying asleep take the long acting (sustained release) form.

Mind-body-spirit interventions and practices

- Create a **balanced lifestyle** that prevents you from feeling overly stressed.
- Incorporate daily **spiritual practices** that give meaning and relaxation to your life.
 - Mindfulness-based-stress-reduction is one program that can enhance your well-being and ability to cope and decrease anxiety.
- Spend time with supportive **family and friends**.
- Take some **time for yourself** each day.

Sleep

- To **sleep best** at night: keep naps short during the day, exercise regularly, sleep in a quiet dark room, go to sleep at the same time each day, and do not sleep with a television on.

Tobacco

- **Avoid smoking** and second-hand smoke.

For additional information, please see our handouts [Breast Cancer Care and Prevention: Non-Drug Approaches](#) and [Integrative Ways to Reduce Side Effects from Breast Cancer Treatment](#).

The information in this handout is for general education. It is not meant to be used by a patient alone. Please work with your health care practitioner to use this information in the best way possible to promote your health.

This handout was written by Lucille Marchand, MD, BSN, Professor, Dept. of Family Medicine and Director of Integrative Oncology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Medicine and Public Health.

Date Created: July 2011
Date updated: November 2013