

October 2012

## October: National Breast Cancer Awareness Month

### Lifestyle Changes to Manage Breast Cancer

#### General Guidelines

Certain lifestyle changes may help you manage your cancer and are important for overall quality of health.

- Limit exposure to estrogen when possible.
- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Limit alcohol consumption.
- Avoid tobacco products.
- Exercise regularly.

#### Limit Exposure to Estrogen When Possible

High levels of estrogen have been linked to the development of breast cancer. For older women, the greatest exposure to estrogen is via postmenopausal hormone replacement. Estrogen replacement has been shown to reduce the onset of osteoporosis, as well as reduce numerous side effects associated with menopause. It has also been shown to reduce the likelihood of colon cancer. Therefore, you should have a frank conversation with your doctor as to the risks and benefits of estrogen replacement relative to breast cancer.

#### Maintain a Healthy Weight

Being overweight, particularly after menopause, may increase your chances of developing breast cancer. This is due to the fact that after menopause, most of the estrogen in a woman's body comes from her fat tissue. The more fat on the body, the higher the degree of estrogen.

#### Limit Alcohol Consumption

Studies have shown that women who drink 2-4 alcoholic drinks daily have a 40% greater risk of developing breast cancer than nondrinkers..

#### Avoid Tobacco Products

Smoking increases your risk of several cancers, including breast cancer.

#### Exercise Regularly

Exercise helps maintain weight and modulates high levels of estrogen. Its favorable effects on the immune system may inhibit cancer growth. Overall, exercise has many benefits. Talk to your doctor about the right program for you. If you are interested in working with a therapist, your doctor can give you a referral.

Source: Michelle Badash, MS  
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### Risk Factors For Breast Cancer

A risk factor is something that increases your likelihood of getting a disease or condition. It is possible to develop breast cancer with or without the risk factors listed below. However, the more risk factors you have, the greater your likelihood of developing breast cancer. If you have a number of risk factors, ask your doctor what you can do to reduce your risk.

- Gender**—Breast cancer is found predominantly in women and is the most common form of cancer in American women. However, men can develop breast cancer, as well. Although there is great emphasis on risk factors for developing breast cancer, a great many cases occur in patients with no known risk factors.
- Genetic Factors**—Women who have a family history of breast cancer (mother, sister, or daughter) have a higher risk factor of developing breast cancer. However, a lack of family history does not protect you from developing breast cancer; approximately 90%-95% of women who develop breast cancer have no family history of this disease.
- Age**—The chance of developing breast cancer increases with age; three out of four cases occur in women over age 50. However, it is never safe to say that “you are too young to get breast cancer.”
- Medical Conditions**—Prior personal history of breast cancer, obesity, pregnancy after age 30, Previous breast exposure to radiation therapy before age 30, and increased exposure to estrogen.
- Specific Lifestyle Factors**—Lifestyle factors that increase breast cancer risk include drinking 3+ alcoholic drinks/day, a sedentary lifestyle, and smoking.
- Ethnic Background**—In the US, Caucasian, Hawaiian, and African-American women have the highest rates of breast cancer. The lowest rates occur among Korean, American Indian, and Vietnamese women.

Source: Michelle Badash, MS  
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### Do You Know the Symptoms of Breast Cancer?

The CDC states that when breast cancer forms, it is too small to feel and does not cause signs and symptoms. As the tumor grows the cancer can change the appearance and feel of the breast. See a doctor immediately if you notice any of the following:

- New lump in the breast or armpit
- Thickening or swelling of part of the breast
- Irritation or dimpling of breast skin
- Redness or flaky skin in the nipple area
- Pulling in of the nipple or nipple discharge
- Any change in the size or shape of the breast
- Pain in any area of the breast

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)  
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### MRI Aids Cancer Detection in Other Breast

Most women know that a mammogram can help to detect breast cancer early. But what about a breast MRI; when should you have one of those? A Mammography is an X-ray picture of the breast. It can detect breast cancer that is too small to feel. An MRI is called for when a doctor needs more information than a mammogram can provide. An MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) is a noninvasive medical test that provides detailed pictures of the breast and surrounding tissue. These detailed images allow physicians to better evaluate what is happening inside the breast.

When a woman is newly diagnosed with cancer in one breast, there's up to a 10% chance that doctor exams and mammography will miss a tumor in the other breast. A large NIH-funded study has now found that magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) can greatly improve detection of cancer in the second breast.

The study involved nearly 1,000 women who were recently diagnosed with cancer in one breast. Each patient's second breast was deemed cancer-free after mammography and clinical breast exams. Within 3 months of these exams, the women had MRI scans.

MRI detected 30 cancers in the second breast that had been missed by the other methods. The study also showed that if an MRI scan did not detect cancer in a woman's second breast, she had only a slim chance of later developing cancer in that breast.

One important advantage of breast MRI, the researchers explained, is that it can detect most cancers in the second breast at the time of initial cancer diagnosis. With early detection, both cancers can be treated at the same time. This increases the odds of successful treatment.

Women who have newly diagnosed breast cancer should talk with their doctors about whether to undergo an MRI of the second breast. Adding MRI scans to a rigorous clinical exam and mammography could lead to more informed treatment decisions and may give greater peace of mind to women with breast cancer.

**Source:** *NIH News in Health*  
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<http://newsinhealth.nih.gov/2007/May/docs/02capsules.htm>

### American Cancer Society: Free Videos on Breast Cancer

Did you know that The American Cancer Society has free, highly educational videos on a diverse range of breast cancer topics that you can view online, including:

- *Cancer 101*
- *Be Active in Your Breast Cancer Treatment*
- *A Good Doctor-Patient Relationship*
- *Are Some Breast Cancers Different than Others?*
- *Understanding the Stages of Breast Cancer*
- *Preventing Breast Cancer Recurrence: What's Right for Me?*

Just copy and paste the link below into your web browser.

<http://www.cancer.org/Cancer/BreastCancer/MoreInformation/br-east-cancer-videos>

### Healthy Recipe: Buttons and Bows Pasta

#### Ingredients:

- 2 cups dry whole-wheat pasta (Farfalle) 8 ounces
- 1 Tbsp olive oil
- 1 teaspoon garlic, minced (about 1 clove)
- 1 bag (16 ounces) frozen peas and carrots
- 2 cups low-sodium chicken broth
- 2 Tbsp cornstarch
- 1 Tbsp fresh parsley, rinsed, dried, and chopped (or 1 teaspoon dried)
- 1 medium lemon, rinsed, for 1 teaspoon zest (use a grater to take thin layer of skin off the lemon)
- ¼ teaspoon ground black pepper

#### Instructions:

In a 4-quart saucepan, bring 3 quarters of water to a boil over high heat. Add pasta, and cook according to package directions. Drain. Meanwhile, heat olive oil and garlic over medium heat in a large sauté pan. Cook until soft, but not browned. Add peas and carrots. Cook gently until the vegetables are heated through. In a bowl, combine chicken broth and cornstarch. Mix well. Add to a pan with vegetables, and bring to a boil. Simmer gently for 1 minute. Add parsley, pasta, lemon zest, and pepper. Toss gently, and cook until the pasta is hot. Serve 2 cups of pasta and vegetables per portion.

**Yield:** 4 servings. **Serving Size:** 2 Cups Pasta and Vegetables

#### Each serving provides:

Calories 329	Saturated Fat 1g
Total Fat 6 g	Total Carbohydrate 59 g
Cholesterol 0 mg	Dietary Fiber 9 g
Sodium 127 mg	Protein 13 g
Total Fiber 9 g	Potassium 331 mg

**Source:** David Kamen. *Keep the Beat™ Recipes: Deliciously Health Family Meals.*

The National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI)

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