

A close-up photograph of a woman's bare chest. She is wearing a green top with white polka dots. A stem of a purple flower with green leaves is placed diagonally across her chest. The text 'b'reast health' is written in a white, cursive font over the image. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green.

b'reast  
health

What You Need to Know About Your Breast Health  
and How to Care For Your Breasts

# Breast Health

Disclaimer .....	5
Introduction .....	6
Reduce Your Risk of Developing Breast Cancer .....	7
Watch Your Weight.....	8
Be Physically Active.....	9
Quit Smoking .....	9
Drink Moderately.....	10
There Are Uncontrollable and Controllable Risk Factors.....	10
How to Keep Your Breasts Healthy As You Age .....	11
Breast Changes During Your 40s and Beyond.....	12
Women Over 40 Are More At Risk of Breast Cancer .....	12
Signs of Unhealthy Breasts.....	12
Tips For Keeping Your Breasts Healthy .....	13
Be Mindful of Your Weight and What You Eat .....	13
Don't Forget To Take Your Vitamins.....	13
Sleep Well.....	14
Avoid Stress .....	14
Breast Cancer Is Not The Only Breast Health Problem .....	15
Lumps .....	16
Breast Pain .....	16
Nipple Discharge .....	17
Breast Infection or Mastitis.....	17
Inverted Nipple .....	18
Do Benign Breast Lumps Increase Your Cancer Risk? .....	19
No Increase In Breast Cancer Risk .....	20
Slight Increase In Breast Cancer Risk.....	20
Moderate Increase In Breast Cancer Risk.....	20

When To Call A Doctor .....	21
Treatment For Breast Lumps.....	21
Follow-Up Care For Benign Breast Tumors.....	21
Medication To Reduce Your Breast Cancer Risks.....	21
Should You Use Medicine To Reduce Your Breast Cancer Risk? .....	22
Lifestyle Changes To Minimize Breast Cancer Risks.....	22
In Summary.....	22
<b>Breast Lumps – Not All Are Cancerous .....</b>	<b>23</b>
Causes Of Breast Lumps.....	24
Diagnosis and Treatment Of Breast Lumps .....	25
<b>Causes Of Non-Cancerous Breast Tumors .....</b>	<b>27</b>
Breast Tissue Changes.....	28
Breast Cysts .....	28
Pregnancy .....	28
Lipoma .....	29
Injury or Trauma To The Breast.....	29
Infection Of The Breast .....	29
Scar Tissue .....	29
Hormone Fluctuations .....	30
Medication.....	30
<b>Types of Benign or Non-Cancerous Breast Lumps.....</b>	<b>31</b>
Fibrocystic Changes.....	32
Ductal and Lobular Hyperplasia .....	32
Adenosis .....	32
Fibroadenomas .....	32
Phyllodes Tumors.....	33
Intraductal Papilloma.....	33
Granular Cell Tumors .....	33
Fat Necrosis .....	33
Duct Ectasia .....	34

Other Non-cancerous Breast Changes .....	34
The Connection Between Breast and Heart Health .....	35
Mammograms and the Detection of Heart Problems .....	36
Chemotherapy and Heart Health .....	37
Radiation Therapy and Heart Disease .....	37
Can You Improve Breast and Heart Health? .....	37
The Best Supplements for Healthy Breasts .....	39
Vitamin D .....	40
Vitamin C .....	40
Selenium .....	41
Vitamin A .....	41
Sulforaphane.....	41
Omega-3 Fatty Acids .....	41
Key Reminders .....	42
Good Nutrition Can Improve Breast Health .....	43
Diet and Breast Cancer .....	44
Eat Good Fats.....	45
Drink Green Tea .....	45
Add Turmeric to Your Diet .....	45
Foods To Avoid To Prevent Sickness .....	45
Conclusion .....	47

## Disclaimer

***We hope you enjoy reading this publication, however, we do suggest you read our disclaimer.***

All the material written in this document is provided for informational purposes only and is general in nature.

Every person is a unique individual and what has worked for some, or even many, may not work for you. Any information perceived as advice must be considered in light of your own particular set of circumstances.

The author or person sharing this information does not assume any responsibility for the accuracy or outcome of your use of the content.

Every attempt has been made to provide well-researched and up-to-date content at the time of writing. Now all the legalities have been taken care of, please enjoy the content.

## Introduction

Breast cancer is now the most diagnosed cancer in some western countries. A positive diagnosis is among the most fearful and anxious events a woman can experience.

Early detection provides more treatment options and hugely increases the likelihood of a successful outcome.

However, breast health is not solely related to cancer or its prevention.

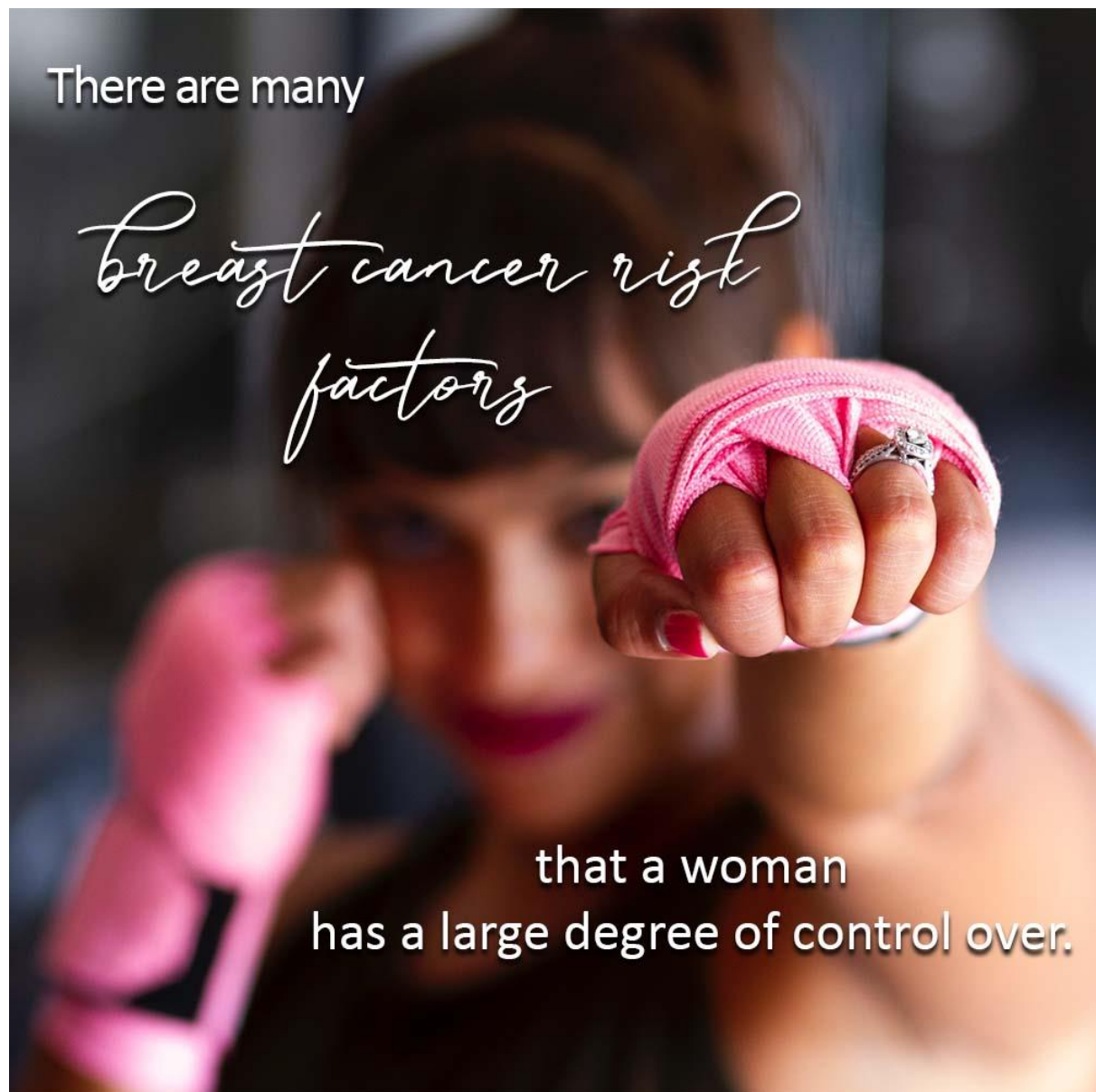
Other issues besides cancer can affect breast health. Many incidences of detected lumps or growths are benign and do not present a cancer risk.

That determination must be made by a qualified health professional. Changes in the breast can occur for different reasons and at different times of life.

Some factors that can influence the risk of breast cancer or other breast problems are largely beyond a person's control, such as age and genetics. But there are also many variables, such as lifestyle factors, that play a role in breast health.

This eBook explains different types of breast health issues, cancerous and benign. It also provides instructions and suggestions for keeping your breasts as healthy as possible.

## Reduce Your Risk of Developing Breast Cancer



There are many

*breast cancer risk  
factors*

that a woman  
has a large degree of control over.

Breast cancer is a disease dreaded by most women.

This life-threatening condition affects millions of women and claimed the lives of more than 600,000 women across the world in 2018 alone.

Imagine how many have succumbed to this condition since then.

Although breast cancer can also occur in men, this type of cancer is more common among women, especially those who are over 40 years of age.

Given that a cure is yet to be discovered, women who have been diagnosed with breast cancer can undergo grueling treatments.

It is imperative that women take measures to reduce their risks of developing breast cancer.

First, what are the factors that increase the risk of developing breast cancer?

- Sedentary lifestyle
- Poor diet
- Overweight or obesity
- Some hormone replacement therapy after menopause
- First pregnancy after age 30
- No full-term pregnancy
- Not breastfeeding
- Drinking alcohol
- Smoking
- Senior years
- Inherited genetic changes
- Dense breasts
- Family history of cancer, particularly ovarian and breast cancers
- Radiation therapy before age 30

Here are some ways you can lower your risk of developing breast cancer.

### **Watch Your Weight**

Being overweight, or more so if you are obese, can increase your risk of breast cancer, especially after menopause. Excess body fat also has other negative impacts on your health, such as hypertension, type 2 diabetes, coronary heart disease, stroke, respiratory issues, and osteoarthritis.

Extra body fat increases your body's estrogen and insulin levels. High levels of these hormones have been associated with breast cancer, so if you are in your 40s or beyond, you must watch your weight.

Although losing weight is more difficult as you age, it is not impossible. Making small but consistent changes to your diet and physical activities goes a long way.

### **Be Physically Active**

This point goes hand in hand with the first one. Being physically active can help prevent breast cancer, and make you feel good! Regularly doing physical activities can help keep you in shape and avoid gaining extra weight.

You don't have to be a gym-goer to check this box. You can do light exercises, sit less, go for a walk, take a yoga class, or do some household chores like vacuuming or mowing the lawn.

It doesn't matter whether you're 20 years old or well over 40, exercising is something you should include in your daily routine to reduce your risk of breast cancer.

### **Quit Smoking**

Lung cancer and other respiratory problems are well-known effects of smoking, but did you know that it can also increase your risk of breast cancer?

A 2017 study published in Breast Cancer Research confirmed smoking to be a high breast cancer risk. The Generations Study noted that women who started smoking at a young age had up to 24% increased risk of developing breast cancer.

Those who smoked for at least 10 years had a 21% increased risk. Even those who had quit the habit were still predisposed.

However, that doesn't spell the end if you are a smoker. It just goes to show the dangers associated with this bad habit. If you need more reasons to stop smoking, then you can add this threat to your list.

## **Drink Moderately**

Drinking too much alcohol can predispose you to breast cancer. This is because alcoholic beverages can increase the level of hormones that have been linked to hormone-receptor-positive cells of breast cancer.

Excessive alcohol consumption can lead to serious health issues, such as liver disease, heart disease, and digestive problems.

It doesn't matter whether it's wine, beer, or liquors, it's not the type of alcohol but the amount of alcohol you consume that increases your risk.

It is in the interest of your health to limit your alcohol consumption or stop drinking alcohol completely. It will not only reduce your risk of breast cancer but also other types of cancer involving the colon, liver, esophagus, throat, and mouth.

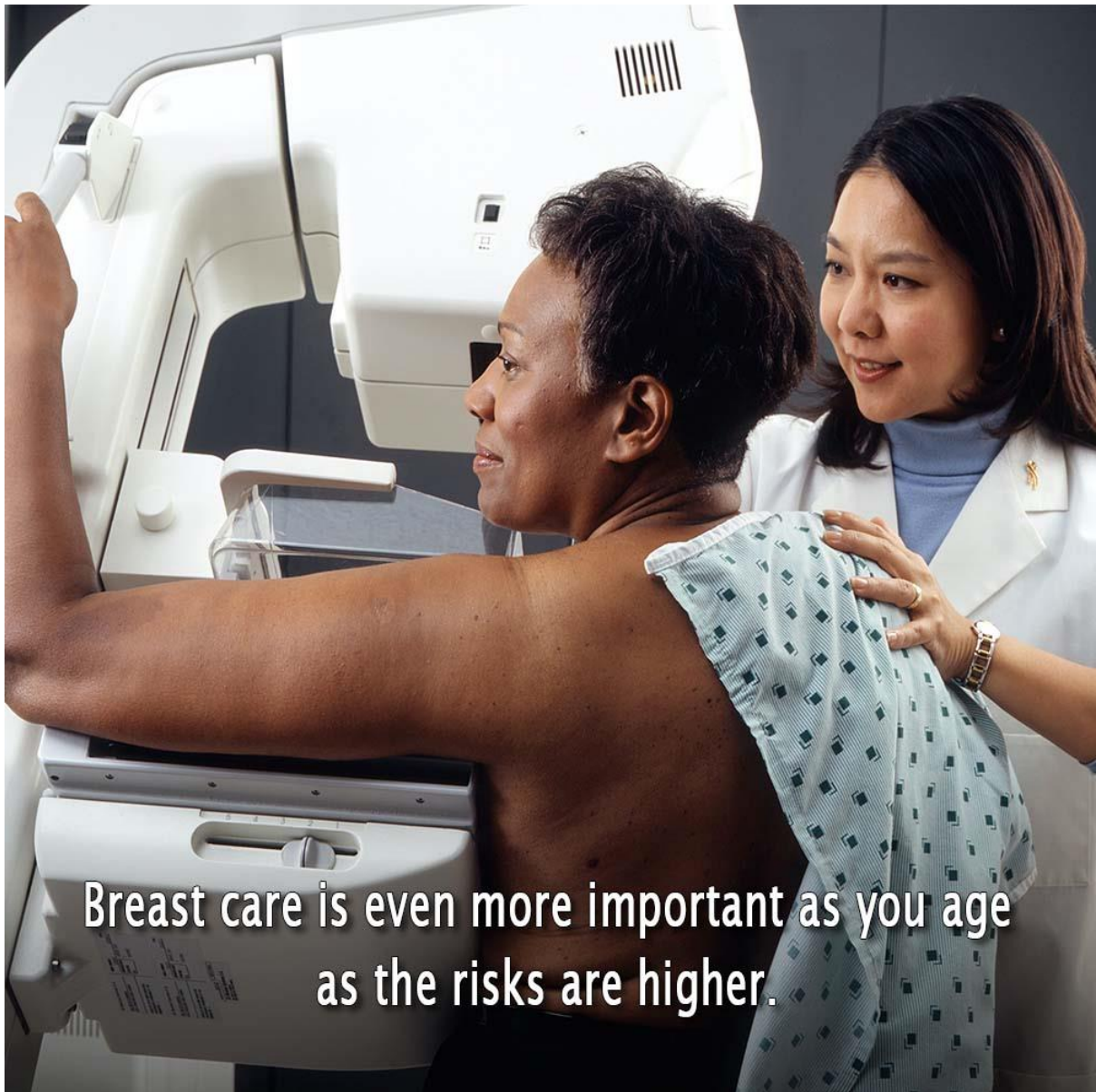
## **There Are Uncontrollable and Controllable Risk Factors**

Some women have a higher risk of developing breast cancer because of factors that are beyond their control, such as age and genetics. However, there are controllable risk factors.

By keeping an eye on your weight, being physically active, not smoking or drinking, or at least drinking moderately, you'll have a much higher chance of protecting yourself against this type of cancer.

Act as early as possible and whenever you notice anything that's not normal with your breasts, consult your doctor immediately.

## How to Keep Your Breasts Healthy As You Age



Keeping your breasts healthy is a must regardless of your age, but if you are over the age of 40, it's time to give your breasts more TLC.

When you reach this age, you'll notice changes in your breasts, particularly their size, shape, and feel.

## **Breast Changes During Your 40s and Beyond**

- You may start to feel lumps in your breasts as your period approaches. These bumps should disappear after your period starts. If not, you have to consult your doctor immediately.
- Your breasts will feel more tender and swollen during perimenopause.
- Your breasts may become bigger because of weight gain and higher estrogen levels. Plus, hormonal changes may lead to dense breasts.
- When you reach your 50s, your breasts may start to sag because of low estrogen levels. This occurs as you go through the postmenopausal phase.

## **Women Over 40 Are More At Risk of Breast Cancer**

According to Breastcancer.org, women become more at risk of developing breast cancer as they age. When you're in your 40s, you have a 1.45% chance of getting this disease over the next 10 years. When you reach your 50s, that probability increases to 2.31%, 3.49% in your 60s, and 3.84% in your 70s.

The risks may be even higher when other factors are considered, such as genetics, reproductive history, and lifestyle.

## **Signs of Unhealthy Breasts**

You may be concerned if your breasts look or feel different to you. Here are some signs that your breasts may be unhealthy.

- Greenish or bloody nipple discharge.
- Unusual lumps before and during your period or after menopause.
- Itchy or reddish skin around your breasts.
- Chronic pain in your breast.
- Dimpling of the skin on your breast.

- Nipple inversion.
- Burning sensation.

### **Tips For Keeping Your Breasts Healthy**

Knowing your increased risks of developing breast problems when you reach your 40s, you must take measures to keep them as healthy as can be! Don't wait for problems to arise.

Here's what you can do.

#### **Be Mindful of Your Weight and What You Eat**

When you reach 40, it's easy to gain weight and overlook it. Since being overweight, or obese may lead to breast problems, eating healthy foods will help keep your weight in check.

For optimum breast health, you should eat leafy green vegetables, such as kale and spinach. Don't forget to include citrus fruits in your grocery list and add in some berries, peaches, apples, herbs, and spices.

Stay away from fast food, processed meats, and fried foods. If you can't avoid them totally, it's okay to treat yourself occasionally, but make sure not to overindulge or make them a habit.

#### **Don't Forget To Take Your Vitamins**

Your circumstances may make it difficult to get all the vitamins and minerals you need to keep your breasts healthy from the food you eat. It may also not be practical to experience enough sunlight on your skin to obtain your needed amount of vitamin D.

If so, make sure you take your vitamin supplements, especially vitamins A, C, and D. These are good for keeping your immunity strong.

## **Sleep Well**

Lack of sleep disrupts the normal levels of melatonin in your body. This hormone helps regulate estrogen that could otherwise lead to breast problems when unbalanced. Get seven to eight hours of sleep every night.

## **Avoid Stress**

Stress can cause unhealthy breasts, not to mention that it can negatively affect your overall physical and mental well-being. Ideally, you should avoid the stressors that cause chronic stress as much as possible.

Understandably, that's not always easy with work and relationship pressures, especially if you're living a fast-paced, hectic lifestyle, but that doesn't mean it's impossible. When you're feeling anxious, worried, or feeling blue, you need to find ways to break the stress cycle.

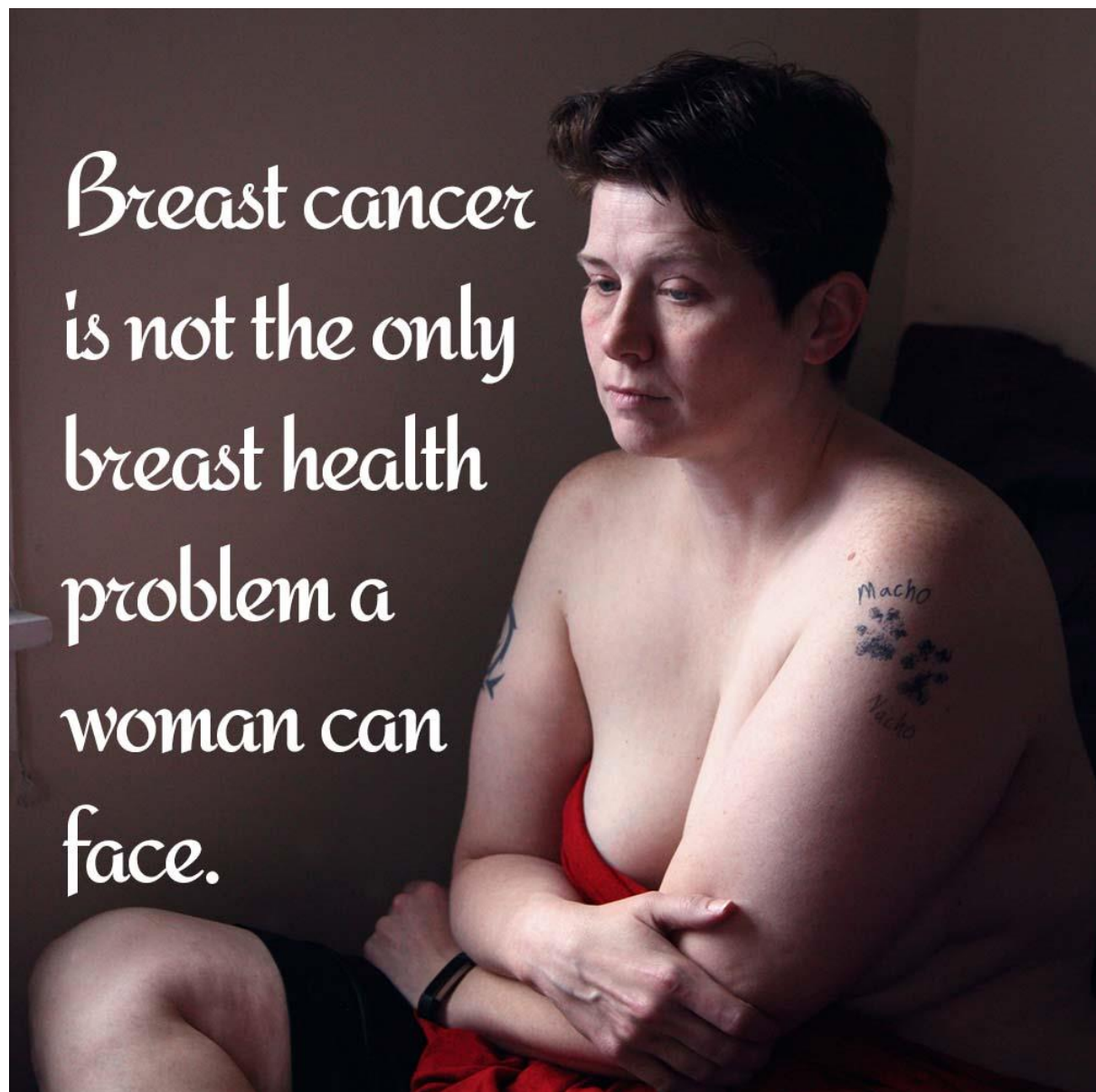
To do that, as much as possible, take a breather and step away from what is causing you stress. Talk to a loved one and ask for a hug. It will help release the hormone oxytocin, which is known to make a person feel happier. You can also try some aromatherapy, or take a short break.

Exercise as vigorously as you are able, as this will expend and dissipate the stress hormones that are so dangerous when allowed to accumulate.

All these things may seem pretty basic, but they can make a large difference to your health. Eating healthy, taking supplements, sleeping well, and avoiding stress, you have probably heard a thousand times. It all seems too simple. However, many women take these 'rules' for granted and don't follow them.

Unhealthy breasts can lead to or be aligned with other health problems, so you need to do whatever you can to keep them healthy, regardless of how simple it seems. Protect them well. Your life may depend upon it.

## Breast Cancer Is Not The Only Breast Health Problem



Breast cancer is one of the deadliest diseases among women.

Cancer is the uncontrollable development of abnormal cells in the body and is the second-leading cause of death in the world.

However, cancer is not the only problem you may experience with your breasts. Changes in breasts are common, but some cases need medical attention. Breast problems are common to women of all ages and may include the development of lumps, breast pain, nipple discharge, infection, and injury.

## **Lumps**

These are common and may grow anywhere in the body not just the breasts. Lumps may vary in size and can be benign or cancerous. They can be sac-like and filled with fluid or solid.

Sometimes, lumps are caused by injury, heredity, and tumors. About 20% of breast lumps are cancerous. Sometimes a lump doesn't need any medical treatment at all unless it causes pain.

Common types of lumps include cysts and fibroadenomas.

Some causes are fatty lumps, simple or milk cysts, and papilloma. Lumps may not need any medical treatment but if they are of concern seek a healthcare professional immediately. Tests can be performed to determine if the breast lump is safe or not.

## **Breast Pain**

Breast pain or mastalgia is a common problem of the breast. It can occur on either breast, and you may feel tenderness, sharp pain, or tightening. It can happen during puberty and after the menopausal stage.

Common causes of breast pain include the following:

- Pregnancy
- Lactation
- Menstrual Cycle
- Medication
- Chest Wall Pain

These are some remedies to relieve the pain:

- Use a hot or cold compress
- Wear a fitted and supportive bra
- Undergo therapy
- Exercise
- Take over-the-counter medicine as recommended by a doctor.

## **Nipple Discharge**

Nipple discharge is common during pregnancy and for a breastfeeding mother. It's fluid leakage from the breast. However, an unexpected discharge is alarming to a woman who isn't breastfeeding. A discharge may look milky, brown, green, yellow, or sometimes bloody. Even so, color and texture aren't enough to determine whether the nipple discharge is normal.

Possible causes of nipple discharge are:

- Infection
- Trauma in the breast
- Abscesses
- Papilloma
- Galactorrhea
- Fibroadenoma
- Breast cancer.

Some may be effects of medication, such as birth control pills, hormonal changes, or breast stimulation. Medication and treatment for nipple discharge may depend on the cause.

## **Breast Infection or Mastitis**

Mastitis occurs in breastfeeding women, or more commonly when breastfeeding is ceased. About 1% to 3% of women develop mastitis. Sometimes breast infections or mastitis don't need medication and go away on their own.

However, if bacteria enter the breast through a cracked or sore nipple and is not treated promptly, it might have serious complications. Among these complications are:

- Breastfeeding problems
- Fever and chills
- Tenderness of the breast
- Fatigue
- Breast abscess.

Non-infectious mastitis is treated without the use of antibiotics, but the doctor will ask about the severity of the symptoms.

Mastitis treatments may include:

- Taking pain relievers
- Taking antibiotics
- Changing the breastfeeding routine
- Massaging the breast.

### **Inverted Nipple**

Retracted nipples are often developed at birth. The nipple points inward instead of outward. It may interfere with your breastfeeding journey. It can also occur in men, but it's more common among women. It's estimated that 10 - 20% of women have inverted nipples. Some cases must be taken seriously, especially if you experience these symptoms:

- Nipple discharge
- Skin changes on the nipple
- Soreness of the nipple
- Lump on the nipple.

The following can help you deal with a retracted nipple:

- Use a breast pump or syringe
- Undergo a surgery
- Use a warm compress.

Although some breast problems are not alarming, you should consult your doctor to have any changes checked. Some cases need further tests and evaluations to determine if they're serious or not.

Most importantly, be familiar with how your breasts feel normally. Do a self-examination every month and keep your breasts healthy by eating a proper diet and practicing healthy lifestyle habits.

## Do Benign Breast Lumps Increase Your Cancer Risk?



Benign breast lumps develop due to changes in the breast tissue.

Even when they're non-cancerous, some conditions may increase your risk of developing breast cancer.

These benign conditions are divided into three risk categories:

### **No Increase In Breast Cancer Risk**

Benign breast conditions that are highly unlikely to develop into breast cancer are breast cysts, fibrocystic breast changes, fibroadenoma, and central intraductal papilloma.

These conditions tend to appear due to hormone fluctuations, such as before or during the menstruation period, or as they approach or after they reach the premenopausal stage.

### **Slight Increase In Breast Cancer Risk**

Benign breast tumors linked to a slight increase of breast cancer risk are those conditions involving the growth of “lesions without atypia.” These include ductal or lobular hyperplasia, adenosis, radial scars, and fibromatosis.

Although there’s only a small possibility that these tumors will turn into breast cancer, your doctor will provide some recommendations that involve lifestyle changes, such as eating healthy foods and regular exercise.

### **Moderate Increase In Breast Cancer Risk**

Benign breast tumors involving the overgrowth of breast cells that have some characteristics of early forms of cancer cells pose a moderate risk of turning into breast cancer.

Also referred to as atypical hyperplasia, conditions such as lobular neoplasia and atypical ductal hyperplasia, mean you need to take better care of your breasts.

Experiencing any of these makes it essential to consult your doctor for recommendations on how to lower your breast cancer risk.

Your risk of getting breast cancer also increases with the following risk factors:

- Age
- Family history of cancer

- Obesity
- Sedentary lifestyle
- No pregnancy
- Hormone therapy
- Breast implants.

### **When To Call A Doctor**

Although benign breast tumors rarely turn into breast cancer, that doesn't mean you shouldn't consult your doctor. You must seek medical assistance when you notice any unusual mass on one or both of your breasts.

Other signs that call for the help of a healthcare provider include tenderness, redness, nipple inversion, nipple discharge, or dimpled skin.

During your initial appointment, the doctor will take your health history, do a breast exam, and discuss the initial findings. Other more extensive tests may be required, such as Breast MRI, needle aspiration, or biopsy.

### **Treatment For Breast Lumps**

Some benign breast conditions do not require treatment. For example, lumps linked to menstruation often disappear once the cycle ends. However, some cases require medical intervention, such as taking antibiotics, fluid drainage, or surgery.

### **Follow-Up Care For Benign Breast Tumors**

If you have a non-cancerous breast condition, you may be required to see your doctor regularly. Follow-up mammograms and clinical exams may be requested within 6 to 12 months for close monitoring. Your doctor may also recommend surgery depending on your condition.

### **Medication To Reduce Your Breast Cancer Risks**

Selective estrogen receptor modulators, namely Tamoxifen and Raloxifene, are the most common medications used to reduce breast cancer risks among women.

Studies reveal that these drugs, when taken for five years, balance estrogen levels in the breast cells to minimize the risk of getting breast cancer by 40%.

However, this will depend on your baseline risk, which means these drugs won't make a noticeable difference if your baseline risk is already low. Tamoxifen and Raloxifene have also been used to prevent osteoporosis, especially among older and postmenopausal women.

### **Should You Use Medicine To Reduce Your Breast Cancer Risk?**

Chemoprevention, or the process that involves the use of medicines to minimize the risk of getting a specific disease, will only be recommended by your healthcare provider if your risk of breast cancer is higher than average.

Aside from that, you and your doctor will have to determine if the positive effects outweigh the possible side effects of taking the drugs.

### **Lifestyle Changes To Minimize Breast Cancer Risks**

Aside from taking drugs, making positive changes to your lifestyle can reduce your breast cancer risks. These include staying physically fit, exercising regularly, eating healthy foods, not drinking alcoholic beverages, and quitting cigarette smoking.

### **In Summary**

Having a breast lump, whether benign or malignant, is something you don't want to occur. In most cases, having a lump in your breast doesn't automatically equate to breast cancer, but it is still important to have yourself checked for proper diagnosis and treatment.

## Breast Lumps – Not All Are Cancerous



It can be alarming when changes are sensed in the breasts or a lump appears and it can be hard not to panic or worry.

However, not all lumps are cancerous.

Most lumps are non-cancerous (benign) or non-life-threatening.

## Causes Of Breast Lumps

A lump may occur at any age. Babies can even have them at birth because of the estrogen they get from their mothers. Puberty in young men and women also results in changes to their breasts.

A breastfeeding mother may also notice lumps, but these are temporary and usually do not need any treatment.

Possible causes of breast lumps include:

- Infections or mastitis
- Injuries
- Hormonal changes
- Benign tumors
- Cysts
- Fibroadenoma
- Fatty lumps or lipoma
- Medical incidence.

Among these, breast cysts and fibroadenomas are quite common. Breast cysts are round or oval fluid-filled sacs inside the breast. They are very common in women aged 30 to 50 years.

Some cysts disappear on their own, but some will last a lifetime. Cysts may be found in both breasts. Some are painful and may need specific treatment.

Fibroadenomas are benign tumors that tend to occur in women in their 20s to 30s. They are small marble-like lumps that are movable and painless. They may change in size and grow on breast tissue.

Women in their 40s and above are at higher risk of developing cancerous lumps, so regular checkups are recommended. When you reach your 60s, it's recommended that you get a regular mammogram or an annual checkup.

## Diagnosis and Treatment Of Breast Lumps

First, it pays to know how your breasts feel and look normally so that you'll notice if there is anything wrong. A healthy breast feels firm on the upper part and somewhat softer on the lower part. However, they become less dense as you age, so they won't feel as firm as they once did.

While most breast lumps are non-cancerous, if there are any changes or lumps that you feel, have them checked by a healthcare professional. They can evaluate and examine you properly, and let you know whether it is benign or if you will need further tests. Some breast lumps can be dangerous and may develop into cancer.

Here are some breast abnormalities that you may encounter:

- A bulge or lump that is tender
- Nipple fluid-like discharge
- Changes in color, size, and shape of the breast
- Redness on the part of the skin and nipple of the breast.

The following are risk factors you should be aware of:

- Age
- Overweight or obesity
- Genes and family history
- Poor diet and lifestyle
- Smoking and/or drinking alcohol
- Reproductive history.

Your doctor may conduct the following tests to determine whether the lump is non-cancerous:

- **Mammogram** - used to x-ray the breast to check for any abnormalities.
- **Breast ultrasound** - used as a follow-up test after a mammogram to see the images of the breast.

- **MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging)** - used to check if there is a lump not detected by the mammogram or ultrasound.

If the doctor finds that the lump is potentially cancerous, more tests will be conducted. One is to take a biopsy, which involves getting a tissue sample to check under a microscope.

The treatment will depend on the type or cause of the breast lump. Some common breast lumps do not need medication or treatment, whereas other lumps found may require doctors to prescribe antibiotics.

If the lump is serious, doctors may order the following treatments:

- **Lumpectomy** - a surgery to remove a lump on the breast.
- **Radiation therapy** - to reduce and ease the symptoms caused by the lump.
- **Chemotherapy** - to treat and kill the rapidly growing cancer cells.

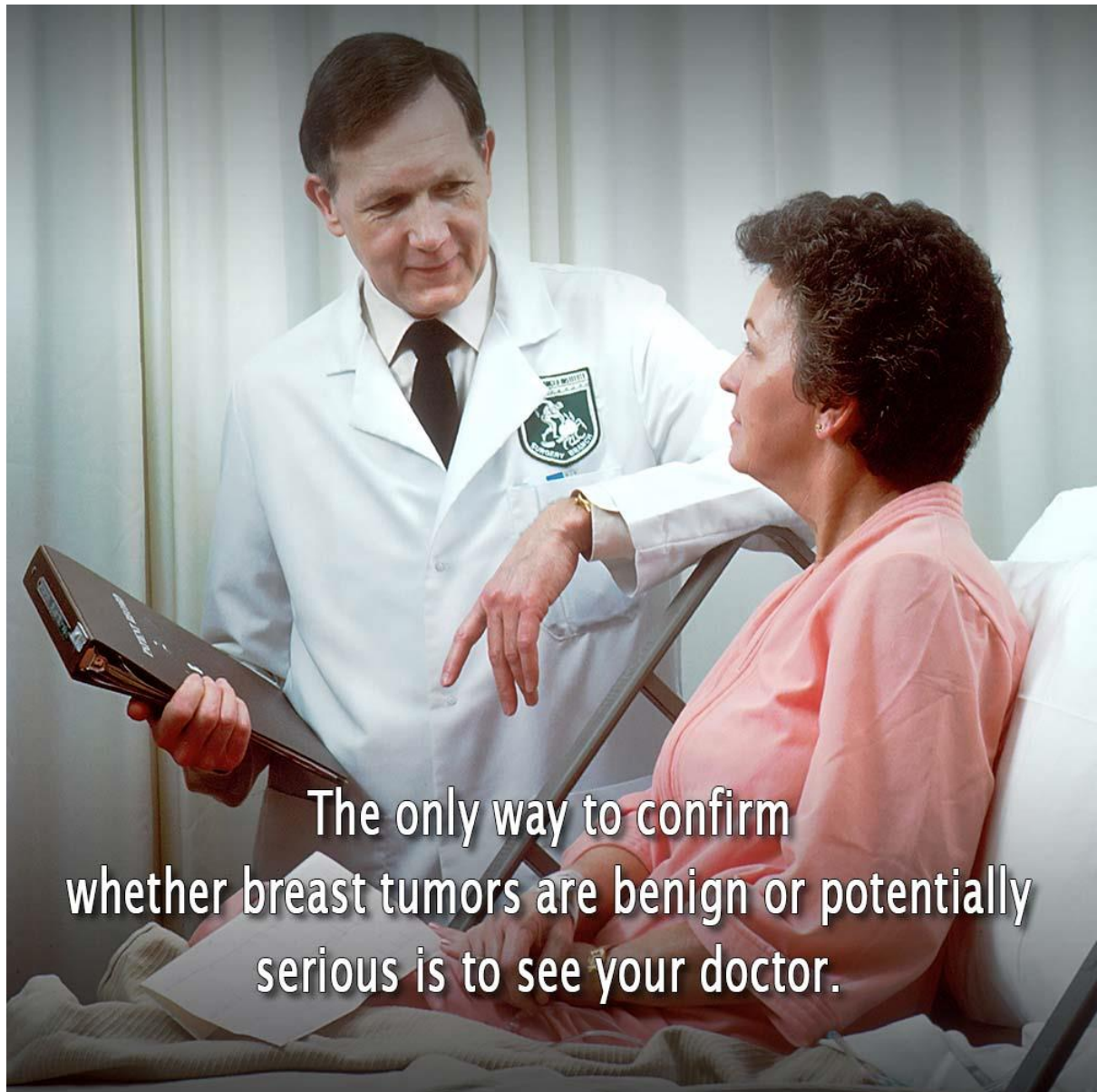
If the lump is not serious, you can turn to home remedies for relief:

- Apply a hot or cold compress
- Wear comfortable clothes
- Take over-the-counter medicine recommended by your doctor
- Reduce intake of caffeine
- Try herbal medicines
- Use essential oils (primrose or raspberry oil).

It can be worrisome to notice any abnormalities in your breast. It can be scary, to say the least! The important thing is to not self-diagnose and jump to the wrong conclusion. Some abnormalities are quite common and non-cancerous, so there is no cause for panic.

The best thing to do is to consult your doctor immediately so that you'll know exactly what is going on. For serious breast problems, early diagnosis is key to preventing them from getting worse.

## Causes Of Non-Cancerous Breast Tumors



The only way to confirm whether breast tumors are benign or potentially serious is to see your doctor.

Benign breast lumps are common among women but they can affect all genders.

Some benign breast conditions like breast cysts and fibrocystic breast changes don't increase the risk of breast cancer. However, other benign breast tumors, such as ductal or lobular hyperplasia, may slightly increase your risk of getting this life-threatening condition.

A lump is something you don't want to feel, and the thought that you might have breast cancer can be frightening. Fortunately, most breast lumps are non-cancerous. Here are the most common causes.

### **Breast Tissue Changes**

Breast tissue changes are common among women who are in the premenopausal stage. Also referred to as fibrocystic changes, they involve the thickening of the tissue or the development of fluid-filled cysts in the breast.

They may appear as firm or rubbery lumps in one or both breasts, along with some level of tenderness and nipple discharge.

### **Breast Cysts**

Breast cysts are non-cancerous tumors that may feel soft or hard, oval or round, movable, and tender, and can be in one or both breasts. They develop when empty milk glands in the breasts are filled with fluid. They vary in size and may form clusters in one or both of your breasts.

Women who are between 35 and 50 years of age who are either premenopausal or postmenopausal and taking hormone therapy are at an increased risk of developing breast cysts.

### **Pregnancy**

Your breasts go through changes when you are pregnant and when you breastfeed. There are instances when pregnant women notice hard, reddish, and tender lumps on one or both of their breasts.

This is due to clogged milk ducts. Although most breast lumps during pregnancy are benign, you still need to inform your doctor right away.

## **Lipoma**

Middle-aged women may feel a small, soft, movable, and sometimes painful lump on their breasts when performing a self-exam. Lipomas are lumps of fat that may grow in your breasts, and in the soft tissues in different parts of your body.

Genetics, injury, and having a rare condition called Madelung's disease may predispose you to develop lipomas.

## **Injury or Trauma To The Breast**

Injury to the breast may also cause lumps. If you have a blow to the breast, use breast pumps, undergo surgery, or wear tight clothing, these can all increase your risk of developing lumps.

They may feel tender, coupled with bruising and hematoma. A lump that is caused by breast trauma is highly unlikely to develop into breast cancer.

## **Infection Of The Breast**

Breast infection is another cause of non-cancerous breast tumors and it's common among women who are breastfeeding. It happens when *Staphylococcus aureus* enters the nipple or through a break in the skin.

The bacteria invade the fatty tissues of the breast, which leads to swelling. The inflamed fatty tissue causes tenderness and lumps in the affected breast.

## **Scar Tissue**

Radiation therapy and surgery may lead to the formation of scar tissue. They develop when breast tissue is removed, such as during a biopsy. Scar tissue may develop into lumps in your breast and may be painful if they form around nerves.

## **Hormone Fluctuations**

Changes in your hormone levels may also cause breast lumps. Hormone fluctuations happen before and during your menstrual period, as well as when you approach menopause. During these periods, you may notice lumps on your breasts, but they eventually disappear.

## **Medication**

Benign breast tumors are a possible side effect of using birth control pills. Aside from developing lumps, you may feel tenderness in your breasts and notice nipple discharge.

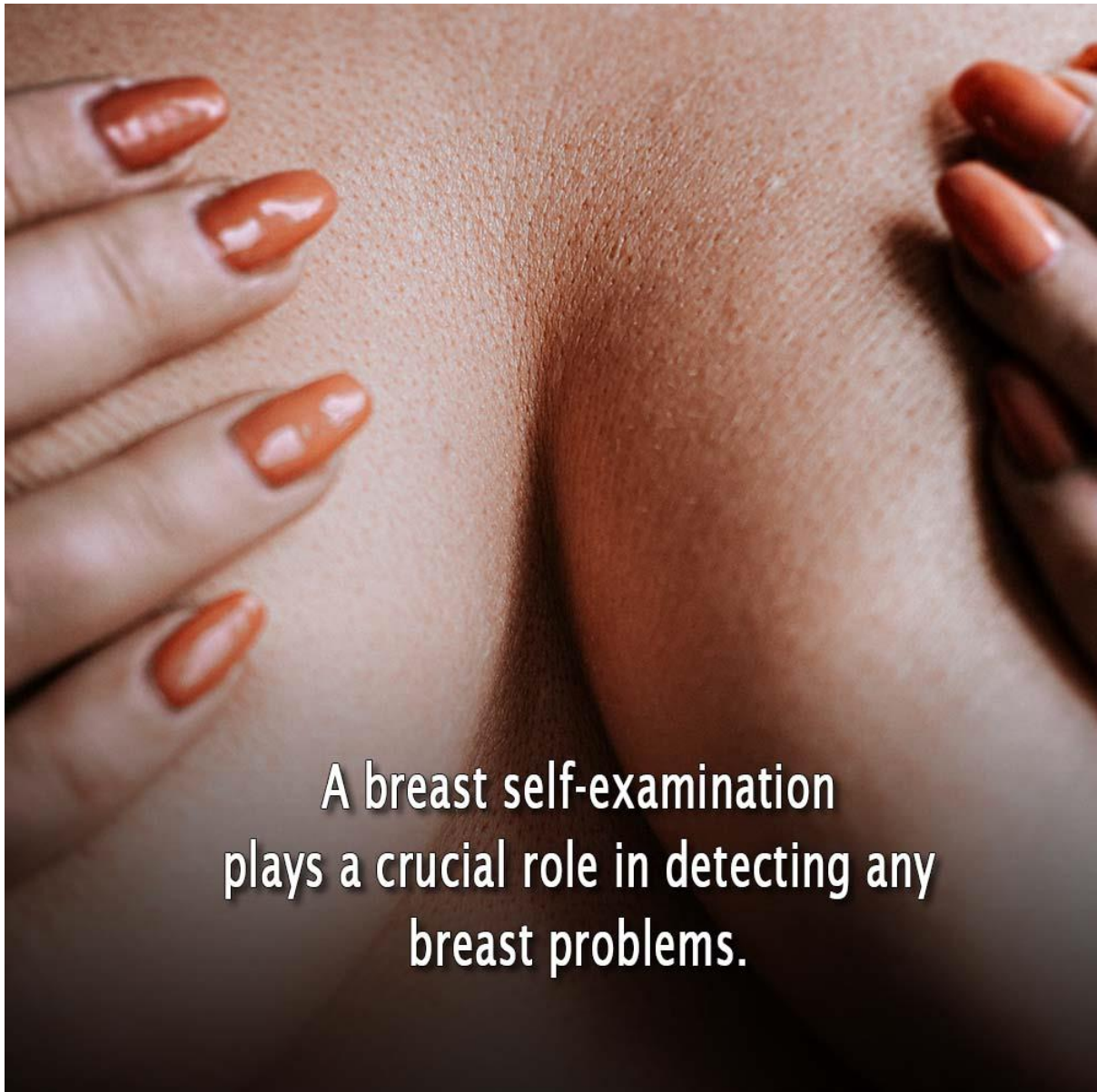
Research also shows that women taking hormone replacement therapy (HRT) have higher risks of developing non-cancerous breast tumors than those who don't. HRT is commonly used by women in their 50s and 60s to get some relief from menopausal symptoms, such as hot flashes.

Just like birth control pills, they also have some side effects, including developing benign cysts and fibroadenomas.

In summary, even though most breast tumors are no cause for alarm, it's still best to see your doctor and have them checked as soon as you notice them. That's the only way to confirm whether they're benign or potentially serious.

Some breast lumps don't need treatment, but in case they do, your doctor will create the best treatment plan that's suitable for your condition.

## Types of Benign or Non-Cancerous Breast Lumps



There are many different types of non-cancerous breast lumps, and a breast self-examination, coupled with regular physical check-ups, plays a crucial role in detecting any breast problems.

If you do notice a lump in your breast it doesn't necessarily mean it is cancerous.

Many breast lumps are non-cancerous or benign, therefore, it is important to visit your doctor for more information and further evaluation.

Here are the most common types of non-cancerous breast lumps.

### **Fibrocystic Changes**

Fibrosis and cysts are the most common types of benign breast lumps among women of childbearing age. Fibrosis will make certain parts of your breasts feel firm, rubbery, and hard while cysts are round and movable bumps in the breasts that may feel tender when touched.

The latter is more common among women over 40 years of age. Fibrocystic changes have a small chance of developing into breast cancer.

### **Ductal and Lobular Hyperplasia**

Some cells line the ducts and lobules inside the breasts. When these cells grow excessively, it leads to a condition called hyperplasia. An overgrowth in the cells lining the ducts is referred to as ductal hyperplasia, while lobular hyperplasia refers to the excessive growth of cells that line the milk glands.

Women with hyperplasia of the breast don't notice lumps. This condition is detected through a biopsy or a mammogram.

### **Adenosis**

Adenosis refers to the enlargement of the milk-producing glands in the breasts. This non-cancerous condition is often detected among women with fibrocystic changes.

Adenosis can be felt as a lump in the breast, but a self-exam is not enough to make a conclusive diagnosis. A biopsy is required to determine if the breast change is cancerous or benign.

### **Fibroadenomas**

Women in their 20s and 30s are more at risk of developing fibroadenomas. This benign breast tumor feels firm, round, movable, but not tender.

Doctors often recommend the removal of fibroadenomas to make sure that it won't progress into breast cancer.

### **Phyllodes Tumors**

Phyllodes tumors are rare breast changes that happen in the breast's stromal tissues. They are mostly painless breast lumps and are often mistaken for fibroadenomas.

Women in their 40s are more at risk of developing them, especially those who have a genetic disorder called Li-Fraumeni syndrome.

### **Intraductal Papilloma**

Intraductal papillomas are benign tumors that grow within the milk ducts of the breast. They may develop as single papillomas in the larger milk ducts, which often cause a bloody or clear nipple discharge, or as multiple papillomas, which develop in smaller ducts located farther from the nipple.

Papillomas are detected through ductograms, but an ultrasound, mammogram, or biopsy may also be required.

### **Granular Cell Tumors**

Granular cell tumors are firm and movable lumps that are often felt at the upper or inner parts of the breast. A diagnosis of these tumors, which are rarely cancerous, can be made through a mammogram, ultrasound, or biopsy.

### **Fat Necrosis**

An injury to the breast, radiation treatment, and breast surgery can damage fatty breast tissues, and that could lead to fat necrosis. Women with large breasts have a higher risk of developing this benign breast condition, which is commonly felt as a lump that's often surrounded by reddish or bruised skin.

## **Duct Ectasia**

Duct Ectasia is common among women who are in the premenopausal phase. This benign breast condition refers to the widening of the breast milk ducts and thickening of the walls, which could lead to blocked milk ducts and fluid buildup.

Common symptoms include thick and sticky nipple discharge, tenderness, and redness in the area surrounding the nipple, an inverted nipple, and a hard lump.

## **Other Non-cancerous Breast Changes**

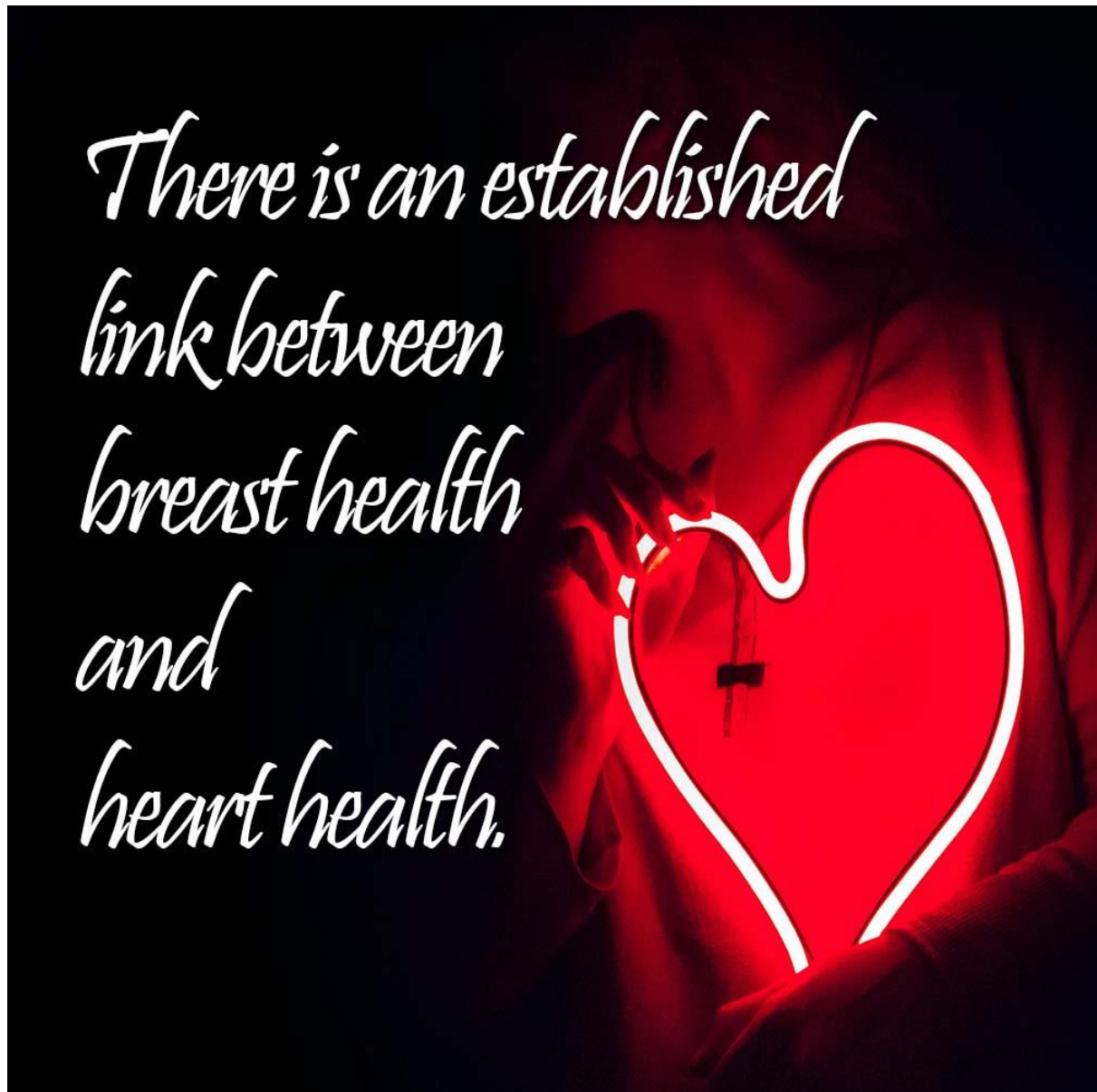
Several other breast changes that are non-cancerous include lipoma, hamartoma, hemangioma, hematoma, adenomyoepithelioma, and neurofibroma.

Although they pose almost no risk of developing into breast cancer, a biopsy or surgical removal may be required to ensure that is the case.

Benign breast tumors are less likely to develop into breast cancer, but that doesn't mean you should become complacent. Talk to your doctor to know more about your condition, risk of developing cancer, and the steps to take to safeguard your health.

Additionally, you must take measures to improve your breast health and overall physical and mental well-being.

## The Connection Between Breast and Heart Health



Surviving breast cancer is a great milestone for any woman. Unfortunately, the problem doesn't end there. Women who have had breast cancer also face the risk of developing heart issues.

Various campaigns have been launched to educate people about heart disease and breast cancer.

February is Heart Health Month and October is Breast Health Awareness Month.

Studies have established a link between breast health and heart health. According to the American Heart Association, similar factors may cause breast and heart problems.

Also, women who are taking breast cancer treatments may be putting their heart health at risk. Alternatively, having a pre-existing heart condition will affect the treatment decisions of women who have breast cancer.

### **Mammograms and the Detection of Heart Problems**

Mammograms help to detect breast problems. This type of x-ray examination can check if there are calcifications in the arteries of the breasts. If white streaks are noted in the breasts, there's an increased chance that the arteries in the heart have them too.

Dr. JoAnn E. Manson said that women with arterial calcification in the breasts have a 70% chance of having them in their coronary arteries. Common risk factors of arterial calcifications in the breast and heart may include:

- Age
- Obesity
- Genetics
- Diet
- Smoking

More studies are required to prove that arterial calcification in the breast is a sure sign that the affected patient will suffer a heart problem in the future. For now, radiologists don't record any notable calcifications in the arteries, although other types of calcifications are recorded.

Other types of calcifications include the following:

- Calcifications due to injury, surgery, or infection that cause damage to fat cells.
- Calcification in the milk ducts.
- Calcification in the ducts of the breasts.

With more research, there may come a time when radiologists can note observations of arterial calcification in the breast, including whether the calcifications are mild, moderate, or severe to help doctors predict the risk of having heart problems.

This will also help in early prevention, as well as in encouraging women to take better care of their breasts and heart.

### **Chemotherapy and Heart Health**

Different types of chemotherapy are used to treat breast cancer, including anthracycline doxorubicin. The only problem with this method is that it can cause permanent damage to the heart. The risk to the heart is only 1% or 2%, but the effects can be devastating.

Meanwhile, chemotherapy, in general, can cause heart rhythm issues like murmurs. Fortunately, these side effects disappear once the treatment ends.

### **Radiation Therapy and Heart Disease**

The effects of radiation therapy on heart health are cause for concern, especially for patients with cancer of the left breast. Studies have shown that higher doses of radiation pose a higher risk of developing heart problems.

However, the technology used for radiation therapy has evolved over the years, and doctors administering this procedure have found ways to minimize the risk to the heart.

### **Can You Improve Breast and Heart Health?**

Although there are some risk factors that you can't control, there are others that you can. For instance, you can make changes to your lifestyle.

Here is what you can do.

- Staying fit and physically active
- Eating healthy food
- Stop smoking

- Drinking alcoholic beverages moderately
- Keeping your blood pressure, cholesterol, and glucose levels in check.

If you're currently undergoing cancer treatment, there are things you can do to help stay on top of your heart health.

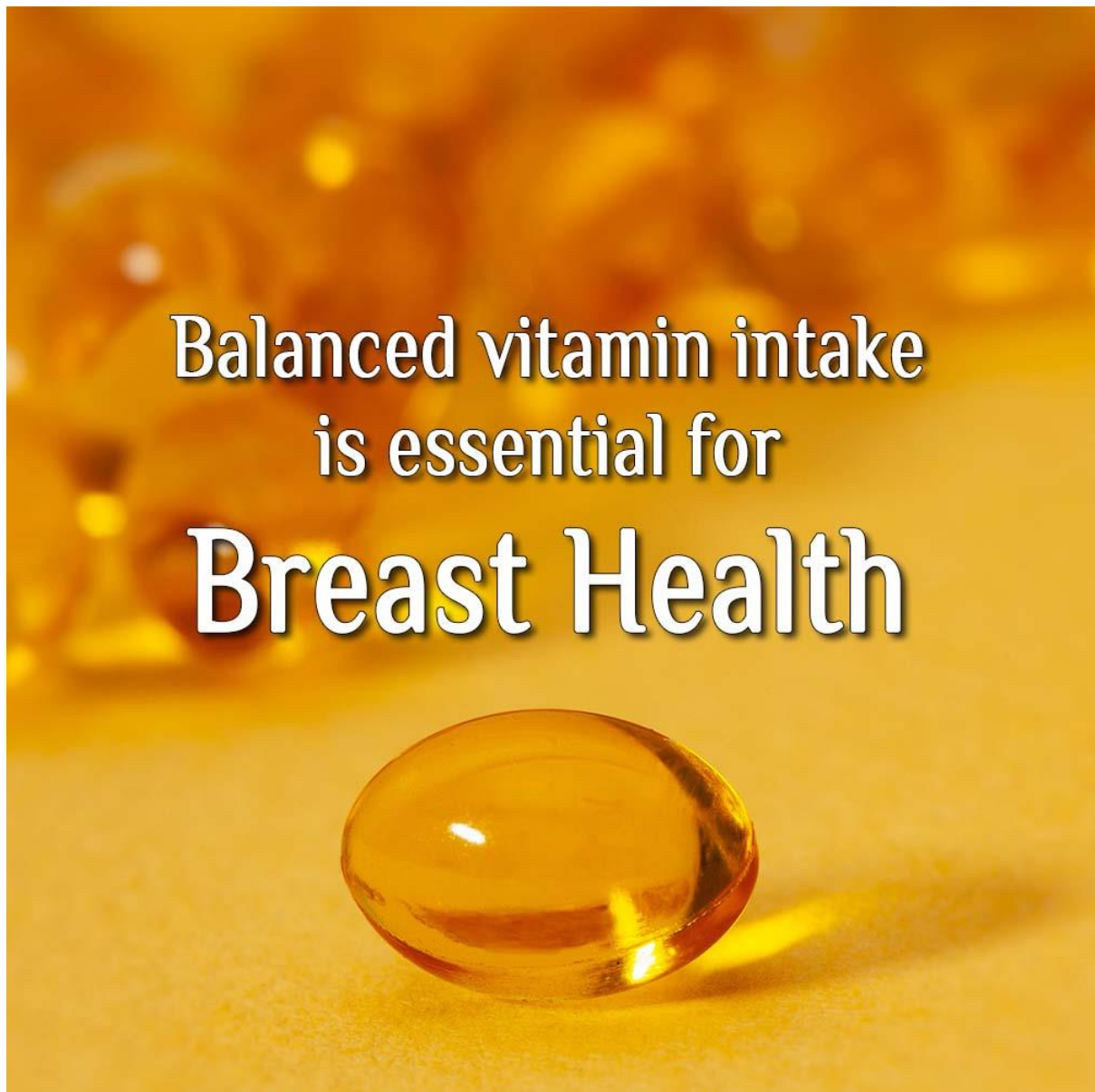
- Know the risks of the treatment you're taking. Anthracyclines, Herceptin, and PERJETA are only a few of the drugs that can impact your heart health.
- Consult your oncologist and cardiologist about the risk of your cancer treatment and its effects on your heart. They will help find a way to minimize them and protect your heart's health.
- Lifestyle factors play a crucial role in keeping your heart health in check.

Undergoing breast cancer treatments can be stressful and that's why practicing relaxation techniques can help. You should also exercise, rid yourself of unhealthy habits, and eat adequate fresh fruits and vegetables.

Breast and heart health are connected, which is why it's all the more important to take care of your body.

Incorporate the suggestions mentioned above, and consult your doctor for any unusual changes you may notice.

## The Best Supplements for Healthy Breasts



As a woman, keeping your breasts healthy is a must. It's not something you should overlook, especially with the risk of developing breast cancer and other painful breast conditions.

Women are becoming more aware of their breast health, which is a great thing!

With some changes in your lifestyle, you can lower your risks of suffering from breast health problems. Aside from getting regular checkups, you can watch your weight, be physically active, and eat a healthy diet.

Aside from eating healthy foods, you may also benefit from taking supplements. Ideally, you should be able to get all the nutrients you need from the foods that you eat.

However, given how so many foods are processed these days, along with our sometimes unhealthy lifestyles, food isn't always enough to give your body the essential nutrients that it needs.

Here are six supplements that you may like to consider to help keep your breasts healthy.

### **Vitamin D**

Vitamin D, also known as calciferol, is responsible for regulating your body's calcium and phosphate levels. They play crucial roles in the health of your teeth, bones, and muscles. Did you know that this "sunshine" vitamin can also help prevent breast cancer?

Several studies have linked vitamin D deficiency to an increased risk of developing breast cancer. Aside from direct sunlight and dietary supplements, you can also get some vitamin D from oily fish, red meat, liver, and egg yolks.

### **Vitamin C**

Vitamin C or ascorbic acid is known to help boost the immune system. It doesn't only help lower your risk of suffering many diseases, it can also prevent certain types of cancers, including breast cancer.

Vitamin C helps fight free radicals, which damage DNA and cause the growth of cancer cells. Ensuring that you have a sufficient dose of vitamin C every day is crucial for your body.

## **Selenium**

Just like vitamin C, selenium contains antioxidants that can fight off free radicals and prevent tumor growth. Although more studies are still required, previous research revealed that selenium may lower your risk of having breast cancer, as well as prostate or lung cancer.

## **Vitamin A**

Beta carotene, which the body can convert into vitamin A, has been found beneficial for preventing breast cancer. Thanks to its antioxidant properties, Vitamin A can lower your risks of developing the disease, especially when taken along with vitamin E and vitamin C.

If you love eating eggs, and orange and yellow vegetables, as well as dark green, leafy vegetables, then your body gets vitamin A. If for any reason you don't eat any of these foods, you can take vitamin A supplements.

## **Sulforaphane**

Sulforaphane is found in cabbage, bok choy, broccoli, and other cruciferous vegetables. Sulforaphane was noted to be beneficial for those who have high-risk factors for breast cancer.

A study showed that this sulfur-rich compound not only improves the health of the heart and digestive system but also prevents the growth or slows down the progression of cancer cells in the body.

## **Omega-3 Fatty Acids**

Omega-3 fatty acids can be found in fatty fish, such as salmon and sardines, and eggs and flaxseeds. If you don't consume these regularly, taking fish oil supplements can help you keep your breasts healthy. Omega-3 fatty acids are good for fighting inflammation, essentially keeping cancer cells under control.

## **Key Reminders**

Taking vitamin A, C, D, selenium, sulforaphane, and fish oil supplements can help keep your breasts in tip-top health and prevent certain breast problems.

The added benefit of these supplements is that they improve your overall well-being, especially when coupled with regular exercise and a balanced diet.

Ensure that you find quality supplements that meet or exceed your health authority's requirements. Also, remember that they're not the sole substitute for healthy food or targeted conventional medications.

If in any doubt make sure that you talk to your doctor first.

## Good Nutrition Can Improve Breast Health



Learning that a person you know, whether it's a close relative or an acquaintance at work has been diagnosed with breast cancer can make you worry about your own breast health.

Breast cancer patients have to go through a grueling battle, with various treatments such as radiation therapy, chemotherapy, and immunotherapy.

Thankfully, many patients survive and recover, but unfortunately, others have lost their lives to the disease. This is why you must take care of yourself.

Breast cancer is just half the story. There are other breast health issues you may encounter, such as breast pain, cysts, fibroadenomas, and nipple discharge. That's why, whether you are young or old, taking care of your breasts should be one of your top health priorities.

One way to do this is to ensure you are getting the right nutrition for your health. Good health and good nutrition are a great line of defense.

Obesity is one of the risk factors that can lead to breast cancer. Fortunately, this is one thing you can do something about. With some changes in your lifestyle and eating habits, you can be on your way to keeping those unwanted pounds off.

You need to be physically active and if you are leading a sedentary lifestyle, you need to get up and move more.

Aside from regular exercise, you must watch what you eat.

### **Diet and Breast Cancer**

Statistics show that between 30% and 40% of cancer cases have had something to do with diet. Even if no one food can guarantee that you'll never get the disease, eating the right foods and avoiding a few unhealthy foods can significantly improve your breast health.

A 2013 study published in *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* found that people who follow a plant-based diet have 15% less risk of developing breast cancer. If you love eating processed foods and a lot of meat, consider cutting back on these types of foods and finding healthier alternatives.

Here's a list of foods that you should add to your grocery list:

- Foods that are rich in antioxidants.
- Some dairy products in moderation.
- Fiber-rich foods.
- Fruits and vegetables.

If you're wanting to follow a special type of diet, one of the very best you can choose is the Mediterranean diet. It's got the healthy foods you need for lowering cancer risks.

### **Eat Good Fats**

When you hear fatty foods, you may immediately associate them with health problems. But there's bad fat and there's good fat. Of course, anything in excess can be dangerous and that means even eating too many good fats is not good. They still need to be consumed in moderation.

A few good examples of sources of good fat are as follow:

- Fatty fish like mackerel, tuna, and salmon
- Avocados
- Olive oil
- Nuts
- Flaxseed

### **Drink Green Tea**

If you love drinking coffee or soda, you might want to stop drinking those and start sipping green tea instead. Green tea contains antioxidants that can help prevent cell damage that can lead to the growth of cancer cells. About three to four cups per day are not excessive.

### **Add Turmeric to Your Diet**

Turmeric contains curcumin, which is beneficial when it comes to fighting breast cancer. Other studies suggest that this active ingredient can help improve the results of chemotherapy. Turmeric comes in powder form and is used as a delicious spice, but it's also available as a supplement.

### **Foods To Avoid To Prevent Sickness**

Keeping your breast healthy also means you need to avoid eating certain food and drinks.

These include the following.

- **Alcohol.** Drink moderately. It's always better to completely stop drinking alcoholic beverages because studies have shown a link between alcohol consumption and breast cancer.
- **Sugar.** Excessive sugar intake has been associated with the development of tumors in the mammary glands.
- **Trans fats.** These are common in processed foods. Avoid donuts and packaged pastries too.
- **Red meat.** When cooked at high temperatures, it can release toxins that may trigger the growth of cancerous cells.

Eating healthy and keeping yourself physically fit and active is a lifestyle choice that you need to make to keep your breasts healthy.

Consuming the right foods and avoiding those that can be detrimental to your health requires commitment but the benefits are well worth any effort.

## Conclusion

In summary, with breast health, some factors are outside an individual's control, but some can be very closely managed.

It makes sense to not fret over what can't be controlled, but to diligently focus on what can. If you have allowed any of the lifestyle risk factors to become part of your life, make every effort to reduce or eliminate them.

It is in every woman's interest to learn how to examine her own breasts so as to be aware of any changes or potential problems. Regular breast screening as suggested by relevant health authorities should always be adhered to, as a minimum.

If you suspect a problem, see your doctor as soon as you can. This is definitely a time where you must err on the side of safety. Early detection is vital.