

## How to Lower Your Risk of Breast Cancer Naturally by Dr. Joseph Mercola

It's important to remember that early diagnosis is *not* the same as prevention. And cancer screening that does more harm than good can hardly qualify as "your best bet" against becoming a cancer statistic! I believe the vast majority of all cancers could be prevented by strictly applying basic, common sense healthy lifestyle strategies, such as the ones below.

- **Avoid sugar, especially fructose, and processed foods.** All forms of [sugar](#) are detrimental to your health in general and tend to promote cancer. Refined [fructose](#), however, is clearly one of the most harmful and should be avoided as much as possible. This automatically means avoiding processed foods, as most are loaded with fructose.
- **Optimize your vitamin D levels.** [Vitamin D](#) influences virtually every cell in your body and is one of nature's most potent cancer fighters. Vitamin D is actually able to enter cancer cells and trigger apoptosis (programmed cell death). If you have cancer, your vitamin D level should probably be between 70 and 100 ng/ml. Vitamin D works synergistically with every cancer treatment I'm aware of, with no adverse effects. Ideally, your levels should reach this point by exposure to the sun or a safe tanning bed, with oral vitamin D used as a last resort.
- **Limit your protein.** Newer research has emphasized the importance of the mTOR pathways. When these are active, cancer growth is accelerated. One way to quiet this pathway is by limiting your protein to one gram of protein per kilogram of lean body mass, or roughly a bit less than half a gram of protein per every pound of lean body weight. For most people, this ranges between 40 and 70 grams of protein a day, which is typically about 2/3 to half of what they are currently eating.
- **Avoid unfermented soy products.** [Unfermented soy](#) is high in plant estrogens, or phytoestrogens, also known as isoflavones. In some studies, soy appears to work in concert with human estrogen to increase breast cell proliferation, which increases the chances for mutations and drives the phenotype associated with cancer.
- **Improve your insulin and [leptin](#) receptor sensitivity.** The best way to do this is by avoiding sugar and grains and restricting carbs to mostly fiber vegetables. Also make sure you are exercising, especially with [Peak Fitness](#).
- **Exercise regularly.** One of the primary reasons [exercise](#) works to lower your cancer risk is because it drives your insulin levels down, and controlling your insulin levels is one of the most powerful ways to reduce your cancer risks. It's also been suggested that apoptosis (programmed cell death) is triggered by exercise, causing cancer cells to die in the way nature intended. Studies have also found that the number of tumors decrease along with body fat, which may be an additional factor. This is because exercise helps lower your estrogen levels, which explains why exercise appears to be particularly potent against breast cancer.
- **Maintain a healthy body weight.** This will come naturally when you begin [eating right](#) and exercising. It's important to lose excess body fat because fat produces estrogen, creating a vicious self-perpetuating cycle.
- **Drink a pint to a quart of organic green vegetable juice daily.** Please review [my juicing instructions](#) for more detailed information.

- **Get plenty of high-quality, animal-based omega-3 fats, such as krill oil.** [Omega-3 deficiency](#) is a common underlying factor for cancer.
- **Curcumin.** This is the main active ingredient in [turmeric](#) and in high concentrations can be very useful adjunct in the treatment of cancer. It actually has the most evidence-based literature supporting its use against cancer of any nutrient, including vitamin D.<sup>8</sup> For example, it has demonstrated major therapeutic potential in preventing breast cancer metastasis.<sup>9</sup> It's important to know that curcumin is generally not absorbed that well, so I've provided several [absorption tips](#) here. Newer preparations have also started to emerge, offering better absorption. For best results, you'll want to use a sustained release preparation.
- **Avoid drinking alcohol**, or at least limit your alcoholic drinks to one per day.
- **Avoid electromagnetic fields as much as possible.** Even electric blankets may increase your cancer risk.
- **Avoid synthetic hormone replacement therapy, especially if you have risk factors for breast cancer.** Many forms of breast cancer are estrogen-fueled, and according to a study published in the *Journal of the National Cancer Institute*, breast cancer rates for women dropped in tandem with decreased use of [hormone replacement therapy](#). (There are similar risks for younger women who use oral contraceptives. Birth control pills, which are also comprised of synthetic hormones, have been linked to cervical and breast cancers.) If you are experiencing excessive menopausal symptoms, you may want to consider bioidentical hormone replacement therapy instead, which uses hormones that are molecularly identical to the ones your body produces and do not wreak havoc on your system. This is a much safer alternative.
- **Avoid BPA, phthalates, and other xenoestrogens.** These are estrogen-like compounds that have been linked to increased breast cancer risk.
- **Make sure you're not iodine deficient**, as there's compelling evidence linking iodine deficiency with certain forms of cancer. Dr. David Brownstein, author of the book *Iodine: Why You Need It, Why You Can't Live Without It*, is a proponent of iodine for breast cancer. It actually has potent anticancer properties and has been shown to cause cell death in breast and thyroid cancer cells.<sup>10</sup> For more information, I recommend reading Dr. Brownstein's book. I have been researching iodine for some time ever since I interviewed [Dr. Brownstein](#) as I do believe that the bulk of what he states is spot on. However, I am not at all convinced that his dosage recommendations are correct. I believe they are far too high.
- **Avoid charring your meats.** Charcoal or flame-broiled meat is linked with increased breast cancer risk. Acrylamide—a carcinogen created when starchy foods are baked, roasted, or fried—has been found to increase cancer risk as well.

This is not an exhaustive list. There are many other strategies that can be useful as well, like practicing self-love and self-acceptance. On my website, [www.mercola.com](http://www.mercola.com), [Interview with Dr. Christiane Northrup](#) you can view my interview with Dr. Christiane Northrup, a practicing physician and ob-gyn specialist who has dedicated a good portion of her life to helping women take control of their health. She believes women who tend to be most at risk for breast cancer are those who have difficulty nurturing themselves and receiving pleasure, which is why learning nurturing self-love and self-acceptance may be especially important for women. (The interview is near the bottom of the article.)