

# Lower your breast cancer risk

A risk factor is something that changes your chances of getting a disease. Knowing which risk factors you have can be helpful.

You may be able to make changes that lower your risk of breast cancer. Also, you can have screenings done to catch it early, when it is easier to treat and cure. Talk with your doctor about getting regular mammograms to detect breast cancer.

These are risk factors that a person may be able to change.



## ALCOHOL

Drinking alcohol raises your risk of breast cancer. The more alcohol a person drinks, the higher the risk.

The American Cancer Society (ACS) recommends that women have no more than one drink a day. If you don't drink, don't start. The lowest risk is in women who don't drink alcohol at all.



## SMOKING

Smoking increases the risk of cancer, including breast cancer. Ask your doctor if you need help quitting.



## MANAGE WEIGHT

Having more body fat after menopause can make estrogen levels higher. Higher estrogen raises the risk of breast cancer.

Being overweight can also raise insulin levels. Higher insulin levels are linked to breast cancer.

The ACS recommends people work to stay at a healthy weight or lose weight if they are overweight. Weight loss can be difficult, so ask your doctor if you need help.



## NOT BEING ACTIVE

Getting regular exercise can lower your breast cancer risk. While exercising five days a week is best, try to exercise whenever you can. Even a small amount of exercise is better than none.



## USING HORMONE THERAPY

Some women use hormone therapy after menopause. Hormone therapy may also be called HRT, HT or menopause therapy. This can help with menopause symptoms like hot flashes and night sweats.

Hormone therapy increases the risk of breast cancer. But, the risk may go back down after about five years of stopping treatment.

Hormone therapy can also increase the risk of heart disease, stroke and blood clots.

If you need hormone therapy for menopause symptoms, talk to your doctor about it. Usually it's best to use it at the lowest dose for the shortest amount of time.

Sources: American Cancer Society, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention