

Diet & Exercise / Weight Management

Many women with breast cancer have long, healthy, and active lives after their treatment. Healthy eating and regular exercise both during and after treatment are important. A healthy diet and exercise can help you maintain a healthy weight and will give you more energy as you recover. Eating well will also help your body rebuild muscle strength and overcome some of the side effects of breast cancer treatment.

Diet

There is no direct link between any specific food group and breast cancer risk. Research has shown that getting the nutrients you need from a variety of foods, especially fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, can make you feel your best and give your body the energy it needs.

Low-fat diet may reduce the risk of breast cancer recurrence.

Sticking to a low-fat diet may help reduce the risk of breast cancer coming back. More research is needed to know who is most likely to get the biggest benefit from this dietary change, but no matter what kind of cancer you've had, you may still benefit from lowering the amount of fat in your diet. Plus, other healthy choices are more likely to come with a low-fat diet, such as eating more fruits and vegetables. All these changes together may help lower your risk of recurrence.

Healthy weight reduces risk of breast recurrence.

Maintaining a healthy weight may help reduce the risk of breast cancer coming back. Studies have shown that women who gained weight after their breast cancer diagnosis had an increased risk of recurrence. Several studies have found that maintaining a healthy weight is strongly correlated with a lower risk of a first-time breast cancer and breast cancer recurrence.

Research on diet and breast cancer is ongoing. Read specific diet and nutritional guidelines.

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Exercise

We've all heard it hundreds of times: exercise is good for us. More and more research is showing that regular exercise can reduce the risk of breast cancer recurrence if you've been diagnosed, as well as reduce the risk of developing breast cancer if you've never been diagnosed. Also, the more you exercise, the more your breast cancer risk may be reduced. Any exercise at a moderate level of activity (including brisk walking) counts. Exercise is safe during and after all breast cancer treatments (as long as you take any necessary precautions and keep the intensity low) and improves physical functioning, quality of life, and cancer-related fatigue.

The American Cancer Society currently recommends that women who've been diagnosed with breast cancer exercise at least 30 minutes a day, 5 days a weeks.