

For immediate release

Good Nutrition Can Play Key Role in Preventing Breast Cancer

This October marks the 25th anniversary of Breast Cancer Awareness Month, and although there is some good news to report – such as a decline in deaths from breast cancer since 1990, and a decrease of 2% annually in female breast cancer incidence rates from 1999 to 2006 – breast cancer is still the second leading cause of cancer death in women. In fact, the American Cancer Society says the chance of developing invasive breast cancer at some time in a woman’s life is about 1 in 8.

While there is no sure way to prevent breast cancer, there are things all women can do that might tip the odds in their favor, such as changing those risk factors that are in their power to affect.

Registered dietitian and certified personal trainer Erin Palinski, founder of the Vernon Nutrition Center with offices in Franklin, NJ and Ramsey, NJ, notes, “The American Cancer Society links one-third of the more than 550,000 cancer deaths a year in part to excess weight, poor diet and physical inactivity, so maintaining a healthy lifestyle is key in working to avoid becoming part of such a statistic.”

Ms. Palinski offers ten positive life choices every woman can make in her own fight against developing breast cancer:

1. Eat yellow and orange vegetables every day. Studies have shown that eating foods high in beta-carotene has been linked to lower rates of breast cancer. Some examples of foods high in beta-carotene include carrots, sweet potatoes, pumpkin, and summer squash
2. Increase your lycopene intake. Diets high in lycopene have been shown to lower the rates of both breast and prostate cancers. Tomatoes and tomato products, such as tomato sauce - and even ketchup - are a great source of lycopene.
3. Eat plenty of cruciferous vegetables. These vegetables, which include broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, radishes, and turnips, contain indole-3-carbinol, which has been shown to lower the level of a type of estrogen in women that may promote breast cancer.
4. Use garlic. Garlic has been shown to kill breast cancer cells in test tubes. When using garlic, peel, chop, and then let the garlic sit for 10-15 minutes before heating. This will allow the cancer fighting compounds time to develop.
5. Eat omega-3 rich fish including salmon, tuna, swordfish, sardines, and anchovies. If you don’t enjoy fish, choose alternative omega-3 rich foods such as nuts and seeds (such as flax seeds and walnuts). It has been found that women with higher tissue levels of omega-3 fatty acids may have a lower risk of breast cancer.
6. Choose whole grains over refined carbohydrates. A study found that women who ate more refined carbohydrates (such as white bread and pasta) had a higher incidence of breast cancer.

7. Choose 1% milk instead of fat free milk. Conjugated linoleic acid is found in milk fat and has been shown to fight breast cancer cells in animals. One percent milk still contains a low enough level of saturated fat that it is still considered heart healthy.
8. Drink green tea. This beverage has been found to contain a high level of EGCG, a compound that has been found to inhibit breast cancer cells in mice.
9. Choose grapes over wine. Research has shown that having more than one alcoholic beverage a day may increase the rate of breast cancer. However concord grapes have been found to contain a cancer-fighting antioxidant.
10. Have your vitamin D level tested. Women whose diets contain a high level of vitamin D tend to have less likelihood of developing breast cancer. If your vitamin D levels are low, your physician may recommend a supplement.

“Cutting back on red meat, avoiding processed meats containing nitrates, and making sure you fill two-thirds of your meal plate with vegetables, whole grains, fruits and beans are other ways to use a healthy lifestyle to lower your risk for breast cancer,” Ms. Palinski concludes. “Add in limiting alcohol intake, exercising regularly, and maintaining a healthy body weight, and you’re definitely stacking the ‘no breast cancer’ odds in your favor!”