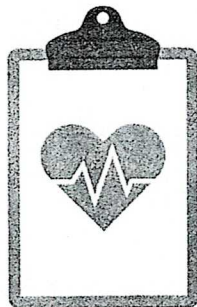


# Women's Health: An Overview

## Woman's Health Overview

- Breast cancer
- Heart disease
- Osteoporosis
- Weight management



Eating a healthful diet and staying active can reduce your risk of breast cancer, heart disease, and osteoporosis. Get more energy to enjoy life while staying healthy and feeling good about yourself.

### Major Disease Risk Factors

The following factors raise your risk for a whole host of diseases, from breast cancer to heart disease and beyond...

- Age
- Being overweight or obese
- Excessive alcohol use
- Family history/genes
- High blood pressure and/or cholesterol
- History of smoking
- Irregular blood sugar levels
- Poor diet
- Staying inactive

### Disease Facts and Statistics

- Breast cancer will affect 1 in 8 women. It is the most common cancer in women of all races and ethnicities.
- Heart disease is the leading cause of death for women in the United States. Roughly 1 in 4 American women will die of heart disease.
- The National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI) revealed "Although death rates from heart disease have dropped in the last 30 years, they haven't dropped as much in women as in men. This may be the

result of coronary MVD," which affects more women than men.

- The NHLBI maintains, "Just 1 year after you stop smoking, your heart disease risk will drop by more than half."
- Half of all women older than 50 will have osteoporosis lead to a broken bone. Women are more likely to get osteoporosis than men are.
- Over 40 million people in the United States have osteoporosis or are at high risk of getting it.

### Prevent These Diseases!

While the approaches to prevention may vary slightly for each different disease, the basic framework that underlies them is the same. The keys are twofold -- a healthful diet and a regular exercise routine.

- Stock up on fresh fruits and vegetables.
- Choose whole grains and small amounts of lean protein and low-fat dairy products.
- Eat balanced meals in reasonable portions.
- According to the Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans (PAG), "For substantial health benefits, adults should do at least 150 minutes (2 hours and 30 minutes) a week of moderate-intensity, or 75 minutes (1 hour and 15 minutes) a week of vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity."
- The PAG go on, stating, "Additional health benefits are gained by engaging in physical activity beyond this amount. Adults should also do muscle-strengthening activities that are moderate or high intensity and involve all major muscle groups on 2 or more days a week, as these activities provide additional health benefits."
- Talk with your doctor about an exercise plan. Remember to start slowly and pick a routine that you can stick with over time.

# Breast Cancer: A Guide for Women

According to the National Library of Medicine, "Breast cancer affects one in eight women during their lives." In fact, not counting certain skin cancers and lung cancers, it is the most common cancer in women, no matter what their race or ethnicity. In 2009 -- the most recent year that comprehensive data was available at the time of this handout's publication -- 211,731 American women were diagnosed with breast cancer and 40,676 women in the United States died from it. Let's review key risk factors and breast cancer prevention strategies.

## Meet Breast Cancer

Breast cancer is a cancer that forms in the tissues of the breast. Ductal carcinoma is the most common type of breast cancer and forms in a milk duct's lining. Lobular carcinoma, on the other hand, forms in the milk glands themselves. Breast cancer is considered invasive when it spreads from its origin points in the milk glands or ducts to other tissues.

Risk factors for breast cancer include...

- Age (your risk rises as you age)
- Being overweight
- Drinking alcohol
- Family history/genes

- Having dense breasts
- Menstruation timeline (starting your period before age 12 or beginning menopause after age 55)
- Staying inactive
- Using hormone replacement therapy

Symptoms of breast cancer include...

- A lump in or near your breast
- Changes in a breast's size or shape
- Changes in your nipple
- Changes in the skin of your breast
- Discharge from your nipples
- Firm or thick tissue near your breast or underarm

## Reduce Your Breast Cancer Risk

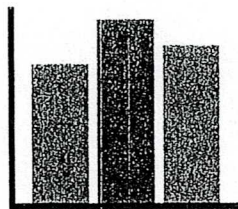
**Get active!** The Office on Women's Health asserts, "Women who are not physically active throughout life may have an increased risk of breast cancer. Strenuous exercise for more than four hours per week may help lower breast cancer risk. Also, being active can help women prevent overweight and obesity, which are known risk factors for breast cancer in women who have reached menopause."

**Control your weight!** Since a woman's odds of getting breast cancer are higher if she is obese or overweight, controlling your weight is a good step toward breast cancer prevention. Eat a healthful, balanced diet and continue to exercise.

**Consider getting screened for breast cancer.** You can do self exams at home or have your doctor check for changes at your next physical. Mammograms are also available, but they're somewhat controversial.

## Breast Cancer Facts and Stats

- Breast cancer will affect 1 in 8 women.
- It is the most common cancer in women of all races and ethnicities.





# Eating Right and Living Well



You can prevent a wide range of illnesses with the proper diet, and fiber plays a crucial role. Don't confuse the right diet with a fad diet -- fad diets have no place in a healthful lifestyle. There are no "quick fixes" or magic pills, but crafting a healthful and sustainable eating plan may just be easier than you think...

## Weight Management Stats

The National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute asserts, "If you are overweight or obese, you are at higher risk of developing serious health problems, including heart disease, high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, gallstones, breathing problems, and certain cancers."

If you are overweight, a loss of just 5-10% of your body weight can improve your blood pressure, blood sugar, and cholesterol levels.

## Meet Fiber!

An eating pattern that is high in fiber reduces your risk of some cancers, diabetes, and even heart disease. Meanwhile, it has a positive impact on gastrointestinal health and successful weight management.

Soluble fiber...

- Lowers blood cholesterol
- Helps to control blood sugar
- Makes you feel full after a meal

Sources of soluble fiber include oat bran, oatmeal, barley, rye, peas, beans, carrots, apples, and oranges.

Insoluble fiber...

- Gets credit for promoting GI health.
- Prompts normal laxation.
- Absorbs water, which makes things easier on your digestive tract.

Sources of insoluble fiber include fruits, vegetables, beans, wheat bran, brown rice, and other whole grains.

Today's experts recommend that adults eat 25-38 grams of fiber per day. Reach that goal by eating a plant-based diet that's rich in fruits, veggies, beans, and whole grains.

## Keys to a Healthful Lifestyle

There are two keys to a healthful lifestyle. The first is to eat a balanced diet. That means plenty of fruits and vegetables, with some whole grains, low-fat dairy, and lean protein thrown in there as well. Skip saturated fat, trans fat, added sugars, and sodium wherever you can. Heed MyPlate's advice – enjoy your food, but eat less of it.

The second key is to stay active. Now, when it comes to physical activity, it's wise to start slowly and then keep at it. According to the Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans, "For substantial health benefits, adults should do at least 150 minutes (2 hours and 30 minutes) a week of moderate-intensity, or 75 minutes (1 hour and 15 minutes) a week of vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity, or an equivalent combination of moderate- and vigorous-intensity aerobic activity. [...] Adults should also do muscle-strengthening activities that are moderate or high intensity and involve all major muscle groups on 2 or more days a week, as these activities provide additional health benefits."

# Osteoporosis: A Guide for Women

Half of all women older than 50 will have osteoporosis lead to a broken bone. Half -- that's a lot! Moreover, over 40 million people in the United States have osteoporosis or are at high risk of getting it.

## Meet Osteoporosis

Did you know that your bones are alive? They're made of living tissue that eventually breaks down and then regenerates. The problem is that, as you age, your bones break down faster than your body can regenerate them.

According to the National Institutes of Health, "Osteoporosis is a disease that thins and weakens the bones to the point that they become fragile and break easily. [People] with osteoporosis most often break bones in the hip, spine, and wrist, but any bone can be affected. You can't 'catch' osteoporosis or give it to someone else."

When you have osteoporosis, you lose bone density and bone strength because the spaces within your bones get bigger as the tissue breaks down. The National Institutes of Health explain, "The outside of long bones -- called the cortex -- also thins, further weakening the bone."

## Osteoporosis Risk Factors

- Age
- Body size
- Ethnicity
- Family history
- Gender
- History of previous fractures
- Overconsumption of alcohol
- Physical inactivity
- Poor diet (especially if it's low in calcium and vitamin D)
- Smoking

## Symptoms of Osteoporosis

Bone loss has no symptoms, and neither do the early stages of osteoporosis. However, later stages have the following symptoms...

- Back pain
- Curving back or hunch
- Loss of height
- Sloping shoulders
- Stomach sticking out

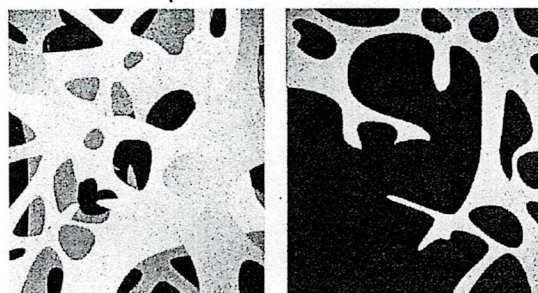
## Reduce Your Risk of Osteoporosis

The Office on Women's Health asserts, "The best way to prevent weak bones is to work on building strong ones. No matter how old you are, it is never too late to start."

Your diet plays a huge role in osteoporosis prevention. There are three major factors in your diet that affect your risk. The first is getting enough calcium, the second is getting enough vitamin D -- so that you can absorb that much calcium -- and the third is crafting a generally balanced and healthful diet.

The National Center for Bionic Information maintains, "It might seem as though resting and therefore avoiding doing things that might risk breaking a bone would protect your bones. But, actually, the reverse is true in many ways. [...] Weight-bearing activity helps strengthen the bones." Plus, the National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases insists, "Exercise not only improves your bone health, but it increases muscle strength, coordination, and balance, and leads to better overall health." So start walking, running, doing yoga, dancing, lifting weights, etc today!

## Osteoporosis: The Process



Normal Bone

Bone with  
Osteoporosis