

# Vail Daily

## Vail Daily Column: Ways to prevent breast cancer

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DEBORAH WIANCEK  
NATURAL HEALTH  
VAIL CO COLORADO

Last week, the Vail Breast Cancer Awareness Group hosted a luncheon to educate women on breast cancer. This is an important issue as one in eight women will get breast cancer. As women, we are concerned about getting breast cancer and we all want to know what we can do to reduce our risk, so I reviewed the current studies and compiled some tips to prevent breast cancer.

- Take hormones only if necessary. In July 2002, the Women's Health Initiative (WHI) study showed that there was an increased risk of breast cancer in women who took estrogen-plus-progestin. After the release of these WHI findings, menopausal hormone therapy use by American women substantially declined in 2003. Recently released data from the National Cancer Institute's (NCI) Surveillance, Epidemiology, and End Results (SEER) program showed a marked, statistically significant decline in breast cancer incidence in 2003 and 2004 this is due to fewer women using hormone therapy. There are many ways to treat the symptoms of menopause using diet, herbs, supplements and vitamins.
- Limit your intake to alcohol. Studies show that as little as one alcoholic beverage a day can increase your risk for breast cancer by 20 to 30 percent.
- Don't smoke tobacco. Tobacco has been shown to increase the rate of most cancers such as lung, mouth, throat, colon, breast, etc.
- Buy organic dairy and meats. We know that estrogen can increase our risk for breast cancer. Dairy products and meat products that are not organic are pumped with hormones such as estrogen. So purchase organic meat, chicken and eggs whenever possible.
- Drink filtered water. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) finds that we have estrogen in our water supplies. This can be due to hormones being flushed down the toilets, cattle urinating in our streams and the amount of plastics in our environment. Plastics are xenoestrogens; these are compounds that mimic estrogen in our bodies. This is why we should drink filtered water out of glass or stainless steel. Many types of bottled water are not filtered water and most bottled water comes in plastic containers. A carbon filter is one of the best ways to filter our water.
- Switch to organic skin care products. The chemicals in our skin care products, shampoos, etc. contain parabens, phthalates, hydroquinone, lead, mercury and placenta are listed on the EPA website for known carcinogens. Visit [www.safecosmetics.org](http://www.safecosmetics.org) for more information.
- Limit your intake of grilled, broiled and fried foods. Blackened meat products increase our risk for breast cancer. Saturated fats in meat and dairy products can increase your risk for breast cancer.
- Exercise for one hour five times per week. Exercise has been shown to lower our risk for all cancers, heart disease and reduce stress levels.
- Eat more veggies. Vegetables are where we get all of our vitamins and minerals. Vegetables have been shown to lower our risk for all types of cancers. Studies show that vegetarians have a lower risk for cancer and heart disease.
- Increase your intake of Omega 3 fatty acids. Flax seed oil has been shown to prevent fibrocystic breast disease and breast cancer.

- Do a monthly breast exam and get a baseline mammogram at age 40 and yearly mammograms after age 50.

We need to start taking charge of our health. Using the simple tips provided above we as women can reduce the incidence of breast cancer.

Deborah Wiancek is a naturopathic physician that specializes in women's health care. Join her at the Riverwalk Natural Health Clinic open house on Women's Health, Naturally on Wednesday from noon to 6 p.m. For more information, call 970-926-7606 or [wiancek@healthref.com](mailto:wiancek@healthref.com).

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