

FIGHT NOW UPDATE

Eat & Live Proactively Against Breast Cancer

By Aaron Tabor, MD

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**FIGHT NOW BEFORE BREAST CANCER STRIKES.
PREVENTION IS THE BEST CURE.**

7 Days to Healthier Breasts Challenge: Day 1

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month, a month dedicated to enhancing the world's awareness and knowledge of breast cancer. In an effort to enhance breast cancer awareness and our knowledge of the importance of diet and lifestyle on breast cancer risk, I am issuing my 7 Days to Healthier Breasts Challenge.

The challenge is based on my *7-Day Prescription for Healthier Breasts*, which is designed to help you accelerate your proactive fight against breast cancer. Over the next seven days, try to devote one day to each day of the 7 Days to Healthier Breasts Challenge. Let's get started!

DAY 1 TO HEALTHIER BREASTS

Day 1 is the day dedicated to scheduling an appointment with your doctor, and reviewing your family history. Here's what you need to schedule:

A Vitamin D3 blood test... Specifically, ask for a "25-hydroxyvitamin D" blood level test. Don't start taking Vitamin D3 until you get your test results back. Your doctor may want to put you on a 50,000 IU weekly prescription dose to quickly restore your levels.

A mammogram if you are over 40 (or over 35 if you have a family history of breast cancer)... Mammograms detect breast cancer in the earliest, most treatable stage, and find cancer an average of 1 to 4 years before you can even feel a lump. Ask your doctor about digital mammograms, and the newer "3T MRI" diagnostic test that is much more powerful than a mammogram for detecting early breast cancer.

A discussion about stopping estrogen plus progestin hormone replacement therapy (HRT)... Unless your doctor can give you a life-threatening reason that you should remain on HRT (combined estrogen plus progestin), it should probably be stopped. Hormone replacement

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is often prescribed for women entering menopause to stop uncomfortable hot flashes and night sweats. Overwhelming scientific evidence documents that HRT increases your risk of invasive breast cancer by 24%. In fact, the government halted the main research study early because HRT's health risks were so dangerous. More recently, a group of Sloan-Kettering doctors reported a 400% increase in breast cancer risk after just 3 years of HRT use. HRT also increases your risk of heart disease, stroke, blood clots, dementia, and urinary incontinence. Menopausal discomforts can be handled naturally. A recent study at The Johns Hopkins Hospital showed that soy protein rich in soy antioxidants can effectively reduce the discomforts of menopause including hot flashes and night sweats. Studies show that flax lignans can also reduce menopausal discomforts.

A discussion about anti-breast cancer drugs... If you are at high-risk for breast cancer, or breast cancer recurrence, you should discuss anti-breast cancer drugs with your doctor. Several classes of drugs, including drugs that block estrogen from binding to estrogen receptors and drugs that lower production of estrogen, could help lower your risk.

A discussion about genetic testing... If you have a family history of breast cancer, then I recommend that you consider a genetic test to see if you are at increased risk. If you have genes that make you more likely to get breast cancer, you can become super proactive and vigilant. Researchers, funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH), have recently found genes that play a key role in the spread of breast cancer to the brain [9]. The more you know now about your inherited risk now, the better you can fight breast cancer now.

A lesson on breast self-exams... Have your doctor teach you a proper breast self-exam so you can perform it monthly regardless of your age. You are the best person to monitor changes in lumps and bumps in your breasts.

Explore your family history... Finally, call or email your blood-related family members (including distant ones) to inquire if anyone in the family has/had cancer. Knowing "what runs in your family" is important. Ask your mom if she took DES (diethylstilbestrol) during pregnancy. Let your doctor know what you discover. Day 1 is a busy day, but well worth the effort to reduce your risk.

7 Days to Healthier Breasts Challenge: Day 2

Today we continue taking action in our fight against breast cancer by proceeding to Day 2 of my 7 Days to Healthier Breasts Challenge.

DAY 2 TO HEALTHIER BREASTS

Day 2 is the day for you to start losing weight with my easy cancer-fighting eating plan. Even if you don't need to lose weight, I've included two critical eating changes below to lower your breast cancer risk.

Losing weight is one of the most important steps to fighting the threat of breast cancer, so I want you to set a small goal to lose 2 to 4 pounds in the next 2 weeks. Once you meet your first weight loss goal, set a new small goal to meet. Lowering daily calories will decrease damage to your DNA, and will lower levels of cancer-feeding hormones in your body.

Go to the grocery store or shop online to get protein shakes and bars with at least 20 grams of protein per serving, fruits, veggies, snacks, and dinner entrées.

Include as many items as you can from my Top Ten list of foods and supplements that fight breast cancer: carrots, green tea, apples, fiber-rich foods and supplements, omega-3 foods (salmon and other oil-rich fish) and supplements, ground flaxseed powder, walnuts, pomegranates, broccoli, and low-glycemic foods (lean proteins, fruits and veggies, and beans). Get Vitamin D3-rich foods and supplements.

Start reducing or eliminating high-glycemic foods from your diet. Sweet tasting foods are usually not sweet to your breast health.

Start a good multivitamin if you don't already use one. Many studies show reduced risks of cancer from common vitamins and minerals like Vitamin A, C, and E, and selenium. As you get older, your internal antioxidant systems shut down leaving your breast tissues exposed to increased damage from free radicals. It becomes very important to shield your body with antioxidants from your diet to block damage to important DNA blueprints in breast tissues. New government research shows that cells from multivitamin users "look younger" with healthier DNA ends called "telomeres". We absorb less vitamins and minerals from our food as we age, thus the need for supplements. Although general multivitamins haven't been shown to reduce risk of breast cancer, it intuitively makes sense to take one for general protection.

TWO CRITICAL CHANGES TO REDUCE YOUR RISK

Reduce your intake of grilled, barbequed, and smoked meat, and any meat cooked at high-temperatures. You could reduce your risk by up to 74%. Doctors at University of South Carolina found that postmenopausal women who consumed the most grilled, barbecued, or smoked red meat over their lifetime have a 47% increased risk of breast cancer. This same study showed that big meat-eaters who also skimped on fruit and vegetables had a 74% increased risk of the disease. Cooking meat at high temperatures until "well done," especially pan-fried or grilled meat, produces high amounts of cancer-causing chemicals. The iron content (from heme in the blood) in red meat may generate free radicals in the colon that damage DNA. Avoid burnt parts of meat altogether. Cook "lower and slower" to reduce the negative consequences. You can marinate and precook meats in the microwave to minimize grilling heat and cooking times. Nitrates/nitrites and salt used in processed meats (e.g., bologna and hot dogs) may also create chemicals that damage DNA. Some meats, particularly processed meats, are typically high in saturated fat. Doctors from Stanford and Albert Einstein College of Medicine recently reported that eating meat does

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not increase risk. The way meat is cooked is likely the most important factor, along with choosing lean cuts.

Decrease your total fat and saturated fat intake, and eliminate all trans-fats. You could reduce your risk by up to 42%. Doctors in one study found that a reduced total fat intake improves relapse-free survival by 24% in postmenopausal women with breast cancer. In the same study, the risk of recurrence for women with ER negative breast cancer decreased by 42%. A study published in the Journal of the National Cancer Institute reported a 32% increase in developing breast cancer among women who consumed 40% of their total calories as fat compared to women who consumed 20% of their total calories from fat. Another European study reported that even a small increase in dietary fat intake increased breast cancer risk. A high fat diet stimulates production of more estrogen. Optimally, less than 20% of your total calories should come from fat, with less than 8% of total calories from "saturated fat." Two studies have shown a 40% and 75% increase in breast cancer risk with high intake levels of "trans-fats". Trans-fats are also deadly for your heart, thus you should eliminate all trans-fats from your diet. Read the labels. Make notes. Learn what you are putting into your body because your life depends on it.

7 Days to Healthier Breasts Challenge: Day 3

Over the last two days, we have started making some serious commitments to our fight against breast cancer. Today, we will take another important step with Day 3 of my 7 Days to Healthier Breasts Challenge to help you accelerate your proactive fight against breast cancer.

DAY 3 TO HEALTHIER BREASTS

Day 3 is the day to start going to bed on time. Your body was not designed to stay up all night.

Alarming new medical research shows that night shift workers have an increased breast cancer risk of 50% to 70% compared to women who work during the day. The researchers believe that exposure to light (from indoor lights at work) during the night reduces the production of "melatonin." Melatonin, which is made in our bodies at night to help regulate sleep and repair tissues, usually protects against breast tumor development. It also acts as an antioxidant in tissues, including the skin.

Go to bed earlier, preferably by 10 pm each night, if you can. If possible, work day shifts instead of night shifts. Getting a good night's rest will also help you keep the weight off, and boost your skin's glow because skin cells repair the fastest at 11 pm every night. Being in bed by 10 pm will help accentuate the natural anti-wrinkle rejuvenation process.

7 Days to Healthier Breasts Challenge: Day 4

If you have been reading along over the last few days, you know that we have been making excellent progress in taking action during National Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Today, we reach the middle of my 7-Day Prescription for Healthier Breasts. Let's continue proactively moving forward in our fight against breast cancer.

DAY 4 TO HEALTHIER BREASTS

Day 4 is the day to eliminate alcohol, or reduce the amount that you drink on a weekly basis.

If you have 1 drink per day every day of the week, you increase your risk of breast cancer by about 7%. Two drinks per day every day of the week increases your risk by about 13%. Even 3 to 6 drinks per week increased risk to 8%. Experts believe that alcohol consumption increases the amount of estrogen in your body. One study concluded that alcohol accounts for 11% of breast cancer cases in England. Similarly, the American Institute for Cancer Research (AICR) believes 11% of US breast cancer cases are related to alcohol intake. Cancers of the mouth, throat, esophagus, and livers were also increased. Drinking combined with smoking is even more deadly. A study in the Journal of Clinical Oncology found that survivors who have one or more drinks per day have a 90% increased risk of recurrence.

Women who had 2 drinks or less per week did not show an increase in breast cancer risk. The evidence shows that total alcohol consumed is the most important factor, not the type of alcohol consumed.

7 Days to Healthier Breasts Challenge: Day 5

We are now over halfway through our 7 Days to Healthier Breasts Challenge and if you have been following the plan, you have visited your physician, dedicated yourself to a diet plan, started going to bed on time, and started reducing your alcohol consumption. Or at least started making those steps you weren't already doing. Let's continue our journey with Day 5...

DAY 5 TO HEALTHIER BREASTS

Day 5 is the day to eliminate all smoke from your life.

Cigarette and cigar smoke, including first- and second-hand "passive" smoke, increase your risk of breast cancer. Smoking's influence on breast cancer has been debated in the past, with some doctors saying it didn't cause breast cancer. The science is now clear—smoke harms your breasts.

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A scientific panel recently concluded, based on new medical evidence, that smoking increases the risk of breast cancer, and that young women and girls face special risks from exposure to smoke. The panel noted that even second-hand smoke exposure during adolescence could increase the risk of breast cancer occurring later in life. Doctors recently reported that survivors who smoke have a 120% increased risk of recurrence.

Both first-hand smoke and second-hand smoke contain deadly chemicals that cause breast cancer, likely by harming your DNA which turns good normal cells into bad cancer cells. The same chemicals also destroy your collagen and elastin by inducing enzymes that chop your connective tissue in pieces causing sagging skin and breasts. Smokers look an average of 10 years older than non-smokers. These same smoke-induced enzymes help cancer in your breast clear a pathway to spread (i.e., "metastasize"). The breast cancer can then migrate to your brain, liver, bones, colon, and other tissues. Smokers even have the deadly chemicals in their breast milk, potentially poisoning their breastfed babies.

If you are a smoker, make an all out effort to quit, involving your family, doctor, prescription medication, over-the-counter alternatives, and behavioral counseling. You can't quit smoking if you are constantly around smokers, so you will have to decide if your breasts are more important than your social group. Second-hand smoke is just as deadly. If your workplace allows smoking on the job, spearhead an effort to change the policy, or change jobs. You can get free help from www.SmokeFree.gov or the American Cancer Society's Quitline® at 1-800-ACS-2345.

Cut smoke off at the source. Doing so could save your breasts and your life.

7 Days to Healthier Breasts Challenge: Day 6

We are nearly to the end of my 7 Days to Healthier Breasts Challenge. My 7-day plan is a great way to start taking action based on the knowledge we will have gained over the first week of National Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

DAY 6 TO HEALTHIER BREASTS

Day 6 is the day to reduce your stress.

A new study shows that mild to moderate stressful events seem to have a cumulative negative effect over time. Younger women who experience two or more severely stressful life events, such as losing a parent, going through a divorce, losing a job, or severe illness, have an increased risk for developing breast cancer by 62%. In the same study, women with depression were more likely to have breast cancer. In contrast, the study also found that women with a "general feeling of happiness and optimism" had a 25% lower risk of having been diagnosed with breast cancer. A recent University of Pittsburgh study found that women with optimistic attitudes had an almost 10% reduced risk of developing heart disease, the #1 killer of women and men, compared to their pessimistic counterparts.

Stress is a disease-causing killer.

Stress can even cause us to overeat and store more belly fat (which produces more estrogen hormone). Chemical messengers in our brain called “neurotransmitters” respond to food intake by affecting our emotions, cravings, and appetites. For example, the messenger “serotonin” controls feelings of satisfaction and happiness. Low levels of serotonin are associated with depression, decreased energy, and increased appetite. Stress can deplete serotonin, which may account for why we have food cravings when we are experiencing tense or difficult times in our lives. Some researchers estimate that 75 to 90% of all doctor visits are related to stress. Unchecked stress levels increase stress hormone levels like “cortisol.”

Long-term consequences of uncontrolled stress include a very dirty laundry list:

- Overeating, leading to excessive fat
- Poor, quickly aging skin
- Headaches
- Bad memory
- Hypothyroidism
- Ulcers and other digestive problems
- High blood pressure
- Chest pains
- Fatigue
- Depression
- Diabetes
- Decreased muscle tissue
- Bone loss
- Poor immune function
- Anxiety
- Sleep disorders
- Reduced immune function
- Poorer DNA repair

Reducing stress isn't simple. It requires identifying the major and minor causes of your stress, and then making tough, often life-altering decisions. If there are situations that can't be changed, then your only choice is to balance the stress by creating more leisure and relaxation time. Where there is a will, there is a way.

Some stress-reducing strategies that I've found effective over the years are:

- Seek spiritual help and guidance.
- Find a trusted friend to discuss your situation.

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- Instead of letting stress kidnap your emotions, take control by making a list. Carefully consider what you can do to either change your circumstances, or adjust your attitude so it won't sabotage your thoughts.
- Play your favorite music every day. Music has power to soothe your soul. When is the last time you put your favorite music on and turned it up?
- Get plenty of sleep—a tired mind is troubled.

If your stress is severe, seek medical help.

7 Days to Healthier Breasts Challenge: Day 7

Today, we wrap up my 7 Days to Healthier Breasts Challenge by discussing the final day of my 7-day plan. If you have stuck it out with me over the last 7 days, you have successfully completed the challenge that comes with my *7-Day Prescription for Healthier Breasts...* Congratulations!!

DAY 7 TO HEALTHIER BREASTS

Day 7 is the perfect day to start an easy walking program to lower your breast cancer risk by up to 44%, and risk of dying from breast cancer by 50%.

Physical activity can reduce your risk of breast cancer and increase survival according to the latest research. Women who are physically inactive throughout life have an increased risk of breast cancer. Being active may help reduce risk by preventing stress, weight gain, and obesity.

The National Cancer Institute (NCI) reported that 3 to 4 hours of exercise each week may reduce breast cancer risk by 30 to 40%. University of Southern California researchers reported in the Journal of the National Cancer Institute (NCI) that women who exercised at least 3 hours per week enjoyed a 20% reduction in breast cancer. Another study found that exercising 4 hours per week reduced the risk of breast cancer death by 44%. Furthermore, this study reported that moderate-intensity activity reduced the risk of breast cancer recurrence, progression, and diagnosis of new primary breast cancer by 34% in breast cancer survivors. Harvard researchers, as part of the Nurses Health Study, found that breast cancer patients who walk, or do other moderate exercise for 3 to 5 hours per week, are about 50% less likely to die from the disease than sedentary women. The protection against recurrence is nearly equal to the reduction seen with chemotherapy and anti-breast cancer drug treatments. Profound! The protective effect was seen in all forms of breast cancer. Researchers found that any amount of exercise (as little as 1 hour per week) helped women survive.

Thirty to sixty minutes of walking, 6 days per week, seems to be the “optimal dose.” Walking outdoors or indoors (on a treadmill or track) produces the same benefits. Wear comfortable shoes and clothes, and a sports bra to support your breasts if you plan to jog. If you need a little more motivation, purchase an iPod and listen to your favorite music as you walk. Take the stairs. Park farther away. If you are wheelchair bound, or unable to walk, try arm exercises instead.

Fight Now by increasing your physical activity levels.



ABOUT DR. TABOR

Dr. Aaron Tabor, MD is the author of *FIGHT NOW*.

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After graduating from The Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, Dr. Tabor devoted his career to helping people live a life they love through medical research. Over 1 million women have already trusted Dr. Tabor for better nutrition and health education. His *prevention through nutrition* research projects with leading hospitals include cancer, weight loss, younger-looking skin, hair, and nails, glycemic-index, cholesterol, pain, and hormonal health. Dr. Tabor educates other doctors about diet and lifestyle research as the Diet & Alternative Medicine Section Editor for *The Journal of Medicine*. He has authored numerous books, papers, and patents in the fields of medicine and nutrition. His recent co-edited book *Nutritional Cosmetics: Beauty from Within* (Elsevier) is the first medical textbook on “inside-out makeover” science—foods and supplements to make you look younger from the inside out. L’Oréal, Nestlé, and others contributed to this cutting-edge work. Dr. Tabor is Founder of Gene Facelift, a Johns Hopkins’ biotech spin-off developing anti-aging and anti-wrinkle gene therapy drugs. Gene Facelift’s drug technology is designed to replace damaged skin DNA in order to heal wrinkles and reverse the aging process.

Please contact me with your questions and comments: DrTabor@fightBCnow.com

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