

Lowering Breast Cancer Risk May Be as Easy as 1-2-3

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You can reduce your risk for breast cancer with three simple habits—exercise regularly, moderate your drinking and stay at a healthy weight—according to a study in *Breast Cancer Research* and reported by [HealthDay News](#).

For the study, researchers examined data from the Women’s Health Initiative, an inquiry that started in 1993 and continued for almost five and a half years. During that time, almost 2,000 women were diagnosed with invasive breast cancer. Of those, scientists excluded women with a personal or family history of early onset cancer (before age 45). Then they reviewed the women’s lifestyle habits.

Researchers found that of the women who had a family history of breast cancer but observed the three health habits, about six in every 1,000 women developed the illness during a one-year period. In comparison, of women who had a breast cancer family history and did not follow any of the healthy behaviors, about seven of every 1,000 women were diagnosed with breast cancer in a year.

The study defined these healthy behaviors as doing 20 minutes of heart-rate-raising exercise five times a week, indulging in fewer than seven drinks a week and maintaining a healthy body weight (calculated as a body mass index, or BMI, of 18.5 to 25).

“Whether or not you have a family history, the risk of breast cancer was lower for women engaged in these three sets of behavior compared to women who were not,” said Robert Gramling, MD, DSc, lead study author and associate professor of family medicine at the University of Rochester Medical Center in New York.

Interestingly, the current American Cancer Society (ACS) guidelines for reducing breast cancer risk include a stricter version of these behavior rules. The ACS recommends limiting alcohol intake to one drink a day, engaging in 45 to 60 minutes of planned exercise at least five days a week and maintaining a healthy weight.

According to the ACS, the breast cancer benefits shown in the study could be intensified if women

followed the more stringent guidelines.

Did you know more factors can affect cancer diagnosis and survival rates? Click [here](#) to learn what they are.

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