Women Can Control Some Breast Cancer Risks

December 8, 2011

Women should pay more attention to known environmental breast cancer risk factors they can control, such as weight, diet, smoking, alcohol consumption, work and life choices, use of hormones and contact with cancer-causing chemicals, according to a new study published by the Institute of Medicine and reported by Time.com.

For the report, the Institute of Medicine convened a panel of experts to review past study findings and determine the link between environmental factors, lifestyle and the development of cancer. Scientists then made recommendations for future research and explained actions women could take to reduce their risk of breast cancer.

Findings showed that of the 230,000 U.S. breast cancer cases expected to be diagnosed in 2011, about 90 percent could be attributed to environmental factors. “We’ve done a better job of treating breast cancer than preventing it,” explained Michael Thun, MD, a senior epidemiologist for the American Cancer Society.

But what can women do to reduce their risk? According to experts, increasing physical activity and reducing weight can help—especially for postmenopausal women. Avoiding estrogen and progestin in combination hormone therapy can also decrease women’s breast cancer risk, as well as reducing alcohol consumption and radiation from too many medical tests. (Scientists still recommended mammograms, especially for women 40 and older, though, because the test uses such small amounts of radiation.) Other suggestions include quitting smoking and avoiding workplace-related breast cancer risks, such as secondhand smoke and working the night shift.

Other possible breast-cancer causes, such as hair dyes, radiation from cell phones, microwaves and other electronic gadgets, were questionable, researchers said, even though they might cause other tumors. And the panel decided that while it is “biologically plausible” that chemical ingredients in plastics, such as bisphenol A (BPA), might affect estrogen levels and increase breast cancer risk, more research is needed to prove this connection.

Some public health scientists criticized the report for making cancer seem like a matter of personal responsibility. One cancer specialist said there should be less emphasis on finding

someone or something to blame for people getting the disease.

Did you know that black women often aren’t told about the anti-cancer benefits of mammograms? Click here to find out more.

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http://beta.docker.realhealthmag.com/article/breast-cancer-prevention-21598-7609