

Review examines breast cancer prevention strategies in the United States

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A new review outlines potential pharmaceutical, dietary, surgical, and other approaches to reducing the risk of breast cancer among women in the United States, and examines the evidence for specific recommendations.

The review says risk reduction strategies for women at average risk of breast cancer should focus primarily on lifestyle factors. Among the recommendations: aside from following general dietary recommendations for healthy eating, there is no clear evidence that specific dietary components can effectively reduce breast cancer risk; while all women should be advised to moderate alcohol use, women at increased risk of breast cancer should moderate alcohol intake or even avoid alcohol; women should maintain a healthy body weight, since gaining over 20 pounds during adulthood has been reported to result in an increased risk of breast cancer.

The authors say use of pharmacotherapy to reduce the risk should be individualized to each patient after a thorough discussion of risks and benefits as part of a shared decision-making process.

"While decreases in both breast cancer incidence and breast cancer mortality have been apparent in recent years, the societal and economic impact of this malignancy continues to be huge," write the authors.

"Although a constellation of breast cancer risk factors has been identified, many of these are not easily modified. Further, many women worry about the potential impact of a breast cancer diagnosis on

themselves and their families. As a result, interest in strategies to prevent breast cancer remains strong."

Article: "Opportunities and Strategies for Breast Cancer Prevention Through Risk Reduction" Martin C. Mahoney, MD, PhD; Therese Bevers, MD; Eleni Linos, MD, MPH; Walter C. Willett, MD, DrPH, CA Cancer J Clin 2008;58:347-371

Source: American Cancer Society

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