

Four myths about breast cancer debunked

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(HealthDay)—There are four common myths about breast cancer that can affect prevention and treatment of the most common type of cancer in American women, an oncologist says.

The first is believing you're not at risk because no one in your family has [cancer](#).

"Less than 10 percent of [breast](#) cancers are linked to genetics or linked to genes that you get from your family," said Dr. Parvin Peddi, an oncologist at the University of California, Los Angeles.

"So just because no one in your family has [breast cancer](#) does not mean you cannot get it," Peddi said in an UCLA news release. "In fact, more than 90 percent of breast cancers are not linked to any family history whatsoever."

Another myth is that sugar causes breast cancer.

"While simple carbohydrates are not good for anyone, sugar does not cause breast cancer or any other cancer in particular," Peddi said. "Therefore, there's no reason to completely eliminate sugar from your diet."

However, to reduce [cancer risk](#), women should eat mostly vegetables, fruits and whole grains and reduce consumption of red meats, processed meats and sweets, the American Cancer Society recommends.

A third myth is that there's nothing women can do to reduce their risk of breast cancer.

"Actually, exercise, maintaining good body weight and limiting the intake of alcohol all have been linked to decreased risk of breast cancer," Peddi said.

Finally, some people mistakenly believe early detection of breast cancer won't change a patient's diagnosis.

"When patients come to my clinic with early breast cancer, I can actually help cure them of the disease. When the cancer is discovered at a later stage, the chances of a cure are much less achievable," Peddi said.

"So it does make a difference to get your mammograms on time as recommended, to help catch the disease at an early stage," she said.

The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force suggests women begin having mammograms at age 50, while the American Cancer Society recommends starting at age 45.

More information: The U.S. National Cancer Institute has more on [breast cancer](#).

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