

# Certain factors linked with discontinuing breast cancer therapy

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For women with hormone receptor-positive breast cancer, long-term endocrine therapy can greatly reduce the risk of recurrence. Many women, especially those in underserved populations, do not continue treatment, however. A new *Psycho-Oncology* study uncovers some of the factors that may be involved.

In the study of 1,231 women who completed questionnaires, 59% reported at least one barrier to adhering to endocrine therapy. Three factors were identified as important: habit (challenges developing medication-taking behavior), tradeoffs (perceived side effects and medication safety concerns), and resource barriers (challenges related to cost or accessibility). Black race was associated with increased reporting of all three of these factors.

"Endocrine therapy can offer a big benefit for [breast cancer survivors](#), but many of the strategies we use to help women who are struggling with medication adherence are only designed to address one barrier at a time," said lead author Jennifer Spencer, Ph.D., of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. "Our study finds that there are at least three distinct kinds of barriers that women might experience when taking [endocrine therapy](#)—suggesting that intervention strategies that can help address multiple barriers at once might be more effective, especially for Black [women](#)."

**More information:** Jennifer C. Spencer et al, Factors Associated with Endocrine Therapy Non-Adherence in Breast Cancer Survivors, *Psycho-Oncology* (2020). [DOI: 10.1002/pon.5289](https://doi.org/10.1002/pon.5289)

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