

Breast Cancer Prevention: Stories from the Frontlines

It's one thing to hear advice about preventing disease and staying healthy. But it's quite another to apply it to our everyday lives. Below are some prevention tips for women with an average risk for breast cancer. Along with the tips are some examples of women finding ways to apply them to their lives. Hopefully, these stories will help spark ideas for fitting breast cancer prevention into your own life.

- 1. Regular mammograms:** Karen* turned 40 this last spring. She checked with her primary care physician and was told to start getting annual mammograms every year or two after her fortieth birthday.** Karen and two of her best friends decided to observe Breast Cancer Awareness Month in October by making appointments for mammograms at the same time and at the same facility. Afterward they went out to dinner to celebrate. They promised to make it a tradition every October.
- 2. Breast self-examinations:** Patty* is a mother of three young kids, and she barely has time to think about herself, let alone remember to regularly check her breasts. But in a breast cancer awareness Facebook post, she learned a handy tip: To check her breasts on the same day each month while showering.
- 3. Limit alcohol:** Linda* has a busy social life. Like many adults, when Linda and her friends get together, they like to have a drink or two. Linda makes sure to limit herself to one drink when she goes out. She learned from her doctor that limiting how much alcohol she consumes can reduce her breast cancer risk.
- 4. Regular exercise:** Amy* had been wanting to get in better shape for years but couldn't find a way to fit exercise into her busy schedule. When she found out that one of the many benefits of exercising was breast cancer prevention, she decided to make the time. Every day during her lunch hour, Amy takes a brisk walk in a park near her work. Sometimes coworkers join her, which makes it more fun.
- 5. Maintain a healthy weight:** Michelle* put on some weight as she got older but had trouble taking off the extra pounds. After a relative was diagnosed with breast cancer, Michelle was determined to maximize her well-being. She made an appointment with her primary care physician to make sure it was safe for her to lose weight. After she got the green light, Michelle found a reputable program that will help her change her eating habits and stay as healthy as possible.

Create a story for yourself! Find a way to put breast cancer prevention in your life.

* These names are fictional, and the stories represent examples of actions women have taken to help prevent breast cancer.

** Coventry Health Care ("Coventry") preventive services guidelines suggest screening for breast cancer every 1-2 years for women 40 years and older. Coventry utilizes the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) evidence-based recommendations that have a rating of "A" or "B," in addition to other recognized guidelines and recommendations, for clinical preventive services.

Sources

Prevention guidelines for women with average risk:
Mayo Clinic: <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/breast-cancer/DS00328>