

Breast Cancer Action: Stop Breast Cancer Before It Starts!

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Breast Cancer

- A leading Women's health issue
- Most common cancer after skin cancer
- Nearly 1 in 3 cancers diagnosed in women
- 2nd leading cause of cancer deaths in women

Public Health Crisis

Each Year:

- Nearly a quarter million women diagnosed
- Approximately 40,000 women die
- Another 60,000 non-invasive (DCIS)
- Approx. 2.6 million women alive today have been treated for breast cancer

Short and Long Term Impacts

During Treatment

- Cost of treatment
- Lost earnings
- Side effects of treatment
- Depression & anxiety

After treatment

- Higher unemployment
- Lower earnings
- Secondary cancers
- Heart disease
- Physical disability

Lifelong Toll of Breast Cancer



Unequal Burden of Disease

- Highest incidence among white women
- 28% of Alaskan & Native American women's cancers
- Black women are 40% more likely to die
- Latina women are 20% more likely to die
- WOC also experience greater financial decline
- Can't explain these differences due to screening

Lifetime Risk of Breast Cancer Up

1964: 1 in 20



1984: 1 in 14



Today: 1 in 8



Rise of the Breast Cancer Movement

- **Breast Cancer Action** founded in 1990
- Massachusetts Breast Cancer Coalition founded 1991
 - **Silent Spring** emerged from MBCC Conference
- National Breast Cancer Coalition founded in 1991
- **Breast Cancer Fund** founded in 1992

Fueled by Other Social Movements

- **Feminist movement** of 60s and 70s
 - Challenging the passive & compliant female patient
 - Authenticating women's knowledge
- **Women's health movement** (like NWHN & OBOS)
 - Peer education
 - Address systemic exclusion from research & policy making
- **Civil rights movement**
 - Unequal burden of disease
- **HIV / AIDS Activism** (like ActUP)
 - Direct action

Politicized Breast Cancer

- **Not only personal tragedy but public health crisis**
- **Refuse to blame women** for their own breast cancers
- Demand **focus on the root causes** of disease
- **Reveal conflict of interest and the cancer industry**
- Create **patient-centered research paradigm**
- Demand attention for **heavily impacted communities**

Successes of the BC Movement

- **Build coalitions across movements**
 - Connect the dots between issues
- **Democratize the science**
 - Research responsive to women's concerns
 - Including patients & advocates in all aspects of scientific review
 - CBCRP and Silent Spring
- **Counter-narrative to mainstream pink ribbon culture**
 - “Tyranny of cheerfulness”
 - Cult of survivor
 - Awareness became the ends—not only the means

Are you aware?



Main messages re: breast cancer

Eat healthy.

**Maintain a
healthy weight.
Exercise.**

**Get a
mammogram**

Breastfeed!

Known Risk Factors : **just 30-50%**

- Family history—*accounts for less than 10%*
- Early menarche/ late menopause
- Late first child birth / no children
- Hormone replacement therapy
- Alcohol consumption
- Weight gain after menopause
- Being tall
- Higher birth weight as a baby
- AGE

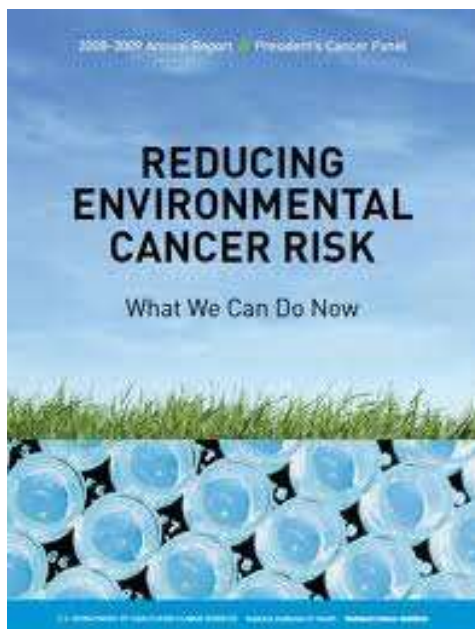
50-70% Have No Known Risk Factor



Science on Environmental Links



The President's Cancer Panel



“The Panel was particularly concerned to find that the **true burden of environmentally induced cancer** has been **grossly underestimated.**”

- 2008-09 Annual Report

Demand Systemic Change

- No more whack a mole
 - Need comprehensive chemical reform
- Complex disease with complex causes
 - Exposures over lifetime to many chemicals
- Refuse to be our own EPA / FDA
- Protect all of us, including the most vulnerable
- Stop blaming women for their cancers

The Precautionary Principle

Act to prevent harm before it occurs



Stop Cancer Before it Starts!



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