

# Key messages

## Breast Cancer UK key messages:

- Every year, over 59,000 people hear the words 'you have breast cancer'. Yet at least 30% of breast cancer cases could be prevented, saving thousands of lives, and avoiding the devastating impacts of a diagnosis.
- It's time to take action to prevent breast cancer. Make small changes in your everyday life to help reduce your risk of breast cancer.
- Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals or EDCs are chemicals that enter our bodies and interfere with our natural hormones. They have been linked to many illnesses and health problems, including breast cancer.
- Together we can prevent people hearing the devastating words 'you have breast cancer'.
- It's never too soon or too late to reduce your risk of breast cancer.
- Join our prevention movement today. Help make breast cancer prevention a reality.

## Breast Cancer UK prevention key statistics:

- The proportion of breast cancer cases that can be prevented is estimated to be at least 30%.
- It is estimated that around 17,800 breast cancer cases could be prevented by making lifestyle changes.
- By being physically active you can reduce your risk of breast cancer by around 20%.
- In the UK it is estimated that 8% (around 4,440) of female breast cancer cases are linked to alcohol consumption.
- In the UK 1 in 7 women will be diagnosed with breast cancer in their lifetime.
- Following breast cancer diagnosis, physical activity reduces the risk of breast cancer recurrence by around 15-30%.
- Risk of breast cancer in post-menopausal women is increased by 2% per 5 kg/m<sup>2</sup> BMI (every 5 units of BMI).
- Women who are overweight or obese after menopause have a 20-60% higher breast cancer risk than those who are lean.
- Lower BMI increases breast cancer risk in pre-menopausal women.
- Breastfeeding reduces the risk of breast cancer by 4.3% for every 12 months of breastfeeding.
- Each year in the UK around 420 men get breast cancer.
- Being obese is thought to increase breast cancer risk in men by approximately 30%.

## **Website / Newsletter copy**

Every year, over 59,000 people hear the words 'you have breast cancer'. Sadly, not all breast cancer cases are preventable but at least 30% of breast cancer cases could be prevented through lifestyle changes.

Breast Cancer UK highlights the links between breast cancer risk and lifestyle factors. They provide guidance and education on how to reduce your risk of the disease. As a primary prevention breast cancer charity, Breast Cancer UK discuss the importance of prioritising prevention as a means of reducing incidence rates and suffering in the long term.

It's time to take action to prevent breast cancer. Making small changes in your everyday life can help reduce your risk of breast cancer.

Check out their website: <https://www.breastcanceruk.org.uk>

### **Other resources:**

[Frequently asked questions about breast cancer prevention](#)

[About Breast Cancer UK and our history](#)

[Our people](#)

## References:

1. Cancer Research UK. Breast Cancer Statistics. <https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/health-professional/cancer-statistics/statistics-by-cancer-type/breast-cancer> (accessed 29 April 2026).
2. Arthur, R. S. et al. (2020). Genetic Factors, Adherence to Healthy Lifestyle Behavior, and Risk of Invasive Breast Cancer Among Women in the UK Biobank. *Journal of the National Cancer Institute* 112(9):893-901. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7492765/pdf/djz241.pdf>
3. Soerjomataram, I. et al. (2018). Cancers related to lifestyle and environmental factors in France in 2015. *European Journal of Cancer* 105:103-113. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/30445359/>
4. Kulháňová, I. et al. (2020). Proportion of cancers attributable to major lifestyle and environmental risk factors in the Eastern Mediterranean region. *International Journal of Cancer* 146:646-656. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1002/ijc.32284>
5. Masala, G. et al. (2017). Up to one-third of breast cancer cases in post-menopausal Mediterranean women might be avoided by modifying lifestyle habits: the EPIC Italy study. *Breast Cancer Research & Treatment* 161: 311-320. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10549-016-4047-x>
6. Breast Cancer UK. Can I prevent breast cancer? <https://www.breastcanceruk.org.uk/about-breast-cancer/can-i-prevent-breast-cancer/> (accessed 1 May 2026).
7. Guo et al. (2020). Physical Activity and Breast Cancer Risk: Results from the UK Biobank Prospective Cohort. *British Journal of Cancer* 122: 726-732. <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41416-019-0700-6>
8. Spei, M.-E. et al. (2019). Physical Activity in Breast Cancer Survivors: A Systematic Review and Meta-analysis on overall and Breast Cancer Survival. *The Breast* (2019): 144-152. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.breast.2019.02.001>
9. Lahart, I. M. et al. (2015). Physical activity, risk of death and recurrence in breast cancer survivors: A systematic review and meta-analysis of epidemiological studies. *Acta Oncologica* 54 2015 5. <https://dx.doi.org/10.3109/0284186X.2014.998275>
10. Zagalz-Anula, N. et al. (2022). Recreational physical activity reduces breast cancer recurrence in female survivors of breast cancer: A meta-analysis. *European Journal of Oncology* 59:102162. [https://www.ejoncologynursing.com/article/S1462-3889\(22\)00070-9/fulltext](https://www.ejoncologynursing.com/article/S1462-3889(22)00070-9/fulltext)
11. Liu, K. et al. (2018). Association between body mass index and breast cancer risk: evidence based on a dose-response meta-analysis. *Cancer Management & Research* 10:143-151. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/29403312/>
12. Chan, D. S. M. et al. (2019). World Cancer Research Fund International: Continuous Update Project-systematic literature review and meta-analysis of observational cohort studies on physical activity, sedentary behavior, adiposity, and weight change and breast cancer risk. *Cancer Causes Control*. 30(11):1183-1200. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/31471762/>
13. Park, J.W. et al. (2021). Obesity and breast cancer risk for pre- and postmenopausal women among over 6 million Korean women. *Breast Cancer Research & Treatment* 185(2): 495-506. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/33010023/>
14. van den Brandt, P.A. et al. (2021). Body size and weight change over adulthood and risk of breast cancer by menopausal and hormone receptor status: a pooled analysis of 20 prospective cohort studies. *European Journal of Epidemiology* 36(1): 37-55. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/33128203/>
15. García-Estevez et al. (2021). Obesity and Breast Cancer: A Paradoxical and Controversial Relationship Influenced by Menopausal Status. *Frontiers in Oncology* 11:705911.
16. Collaborative Group on Hormonal Factors in Breast Cancer (2002). Breast cancer and breastfeeding: collaborative reanalysis of individual data from 47 epidemiological studies in 30 countries, including 50302 women with breast cancer and 96973 women without the disease. *Lancet* 360: 187-195. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(02\)09454-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(02)09454-0)
17. Brinton, L. A. et al. (2014). Anthropometric and hormonal risk factors for male breast cancer: male breast cancer pooling project results. *Journal of the National Cancer Institute*. 106(3): djt465. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/24552677/>