



Is a teenage girl you
care about at risk for
Breast Cancer?

**Evidence says -
she could be.**

// Take it from a young woman who's had breast cancer.

I wish it had been talked about. I wish I had known more about the links between cancer and lifestyle when I was younger."

Kelly, Breast Cancer Survivor, aged 30

What's the risk?

Research has shown that the following three lifestyle factors carry a risk of breast cancer.

- ✓ Unhealthy eating
- ✓ Not enough physical activity
- ✓ Too much alcohol

Here's what we know:

Eating:

The risk of breast cancer is likely to increase with unhealthy eating habits.

Physical activity:

The risk of breast cancer increases for girls and young women who do not exercise regularly.

Alcohol:

The risk of breast cancer increases with every alcoholic drink consumed. All drinks carry the same risk – beer, wine, liquor.

Why are teenage girls at risk?

When girls are young, moms or caregivers often make sure they get healthy food and drinks and exercise.

As they get older, teens start to make their own choices on what to eat, drink and do.

Research shows that when girls enter their teens, they often adopt unhealthy eating habits, drink more alcohol, and become less physically active. These lifestyle patterns cluster at this age, and can become fixed for life.

So what they do now can affect their breast health forever.

Why are you the best messenger?

A survey of women in Ontario found that most think that teenage girls should have information on the risk of breast cancer.

Plus, a recent study of girls aged 16 to 20 found that they want to hear about serious issues - like breast cancer - from women they trust: mothers, older sisters, special teachers and others.

A common thread throughout both studies was a desire for Facts and Personal Stories.

What do the experts say?

Eating:

We know that teenage girls tend to diet or eat junk food. They are more exposed to unhealthy, fatty foods. We also know that maintaining a healthy weight can be a factor in reducing the risk of breast cancer.

And we know that a diet rich in vegetables and fruit, whole grains and foods low in fat and sugar is a teenage girl's best bet for a life-time healthy body. (See Canada's Food Guide for food choices for every age group.)

Physical Activity:

Many girls become less physically active in their teens. School work, computers, cell phones and non-active socializing become more important than sports, the gym, or even walking. Yet girls and young women who exercise regularly as teens have a substantially lower risk of breast cancer in the future, compared to those who are less active.

Alcohol:

Younger teenage girls start to experiment with alcohol, while older girls often binge drink. The Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation says there is evidence that drinking alcohol leads to an increased risk of breast cancer. Even low levels of alcohol (more than 1 drink a day) can increase a woman's risk of developing breast cancer. And the more alcohol consumed, the greater the risk.

If you care about a teenage girl
help her to reduce her risk of
breast cancer. Here's how.

- ✓ Eat smart.
- ✓ Get physical.
- ✓ Limit the alcohol.

Find out more about breast health
and the risk of breast cancer:



www.parentactionondrugs.org



www.pinktulip.ca



www.cbcf.org

Breast Cancer:
You can do something about it.



www.hookuptobreastcancerprevention.ca