

10) Environmental Factors -- Research has not yet proven whether there are breast cancer risk factors involved in a number of environmental exposures, including radiation, UV rays in sunlight, artificial sweeteners, pesticides and electromagnetic fields that surround electronic devices like microwave ovens and cell phones.

Are lesbian, bisexual and queer women more at risk for breast cancer?

Lesbians are less likely to seek routine health care because of the discomfort of coming out to health care providers and less access to health insurance. With fewer doctor visits, lesbian and bisexual women are less likely to have mammograms and professional breast exams. Studies also show that lesbian and bisexual women are less likely to perform breast self-exam regularly. For these reasons, lesbians and bisexual women may be less likely to have cancers detected at earlier, more treatable, stages.

Lesbians are less likely to give birth by age 30 if at all, which increases risk. Some studies indicate that lesbians may use alcohol more, smoke tobacco more and have higher body weight, all of which may increase a woman's risk for breast cancer.

PCOS and Cancer: Recent research has found that lesbians have a higher prevalence of PCOS. A recent study found that the prevalence of PCO was 32% in heterosexual women and 80% in lesbian women, and that the prevalence of PCOS was 14% in heterosexual women and 38% in lesbian women. If you have PCOS, you've probably heard that you have a much higher risk of cardiovascular disease and diabetes. But what about cancer? Are you at risk? The relationship between PCOS and cancers in general is not completely clear, although women who are overweight are more likely to get some kind of cancer. Women who are infertile (whether they have PCOS or not) are more likely than fertile women to get a cancer of the reproductive system. The strongest link between a cancer and PCOS is endometrial cancer. A few studies have suggested a correlation between PCOS and breast cancer, while some have not.

TOP FIVE THINGS YOU CAN DO TO TAKE CARE OF YOUR BREASTS...

1. Learn how to do breast self-exam and do it every month.
2. Have a health care provider examine your breasts every year and answer any questions you have.
3. If you have no risk factors for breast cancer, get a baseline mammogram when you're 40. Then every 1-2 years after that -- assuming everything is fine -- until you are 50. After 50 get a mammogram every year.
4. Keep your diet low in fat.
5. Keep your alcohol consumption light.

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