

## MY BREAST HEALTH – ELEVATED RISK

### Congratulations on investing in your health!

Recently you invested in your personal **breast health** by completing your screening mammogram and risk assessment as part of the Hoag Early Risk Assessment Program (HERA). Your involvement and participation in this program will be an important step in better understanding your risk for breast cancer. While prevention of breast cancer is the main objective of this program, these lifestyle recommendations to reduce breast cancer risk will also lead to a healthier you by reducing your risk now and in the future. Be your own advocate! Take charge, be breast aware, and obtain a yearly mammogram and clinical breast exam by your clinician. The plan below will help you stay **proactive** and attuned to your breast health.

### BREAST CANCER PREVENTION = DO SOMETHING

Move (exercise), Monitor and limit (alcohol intake), Discontinue (smoking), Maintain (healthy weight), Manage and reduce (stress).

### MAINTAIN A HEALTHY DIET

**Food.** The foods you put in your body can actually help **decrease your risk** of developing breast and ovarian cancer. Every time you go to the store or make a decision at a restaurant, remind yourself of the power of smart food decisions. Reduce your risk by eating these foods regularly:

- Fruits
- Vegetables
- Lean proteins like fish, chicken and turkey
- Grains
- Avoid red meats

Want more ideas on healthy food options? Check out recommendations at: <http://www.choosemyplate.gov>

**Alcohol.** Limiting alcohol and not smoking will also help reduce your risks for breast cancer. If you choose to drink alcohol, limit yourself to no more than 2 drinks per week.



## BE PHYSICALLY ACTIVE

**Move.** Physical activity can help you maintain a healthy weight which helps prevent breast cancer. As little as **5 days per week of brisk walking for 30 minutes** can help reduce your risks. Want ideas on how to start a physical regimen that works for you?

Visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/everyone/guidelines/adults.htm>

## STAY AWARE

**Vitamin D.** Current data suggests that higher intake of vitamin D (especially during adolescence) reduces the risk of developing breast cancer. The current recommendation is to take 600IUs of Vitamin D daily. Your recommended dose may be higher if you are deficient in Vitamin D.

**Sleep.** Get a good nights sleep! Several studies have suggested that women who work at night may have an increased risk of developing breast cancer. The reason for this is not well understood but more research is being done to further clarify this finding. This may be due to changes in hormone production such as melatonin. Prioritize your sleep!

**Hormone Awareness.** Despite the many benefits of hormones for contraception and management of menopause, there are also potential risks to consider and discuss with your provider.

**Manage Stress.** Manage and reduce stress. Whether your stress is spiraling out of control or you've already got it tamed, you can benefit from learning relaxation techniques. Learning basic relaxation techniques is easy. Relaxation techniques are often free or low cost, pose little risk, and can be done just about anywhere. Relaxation strategies can include: deep breathing, yoga, Tai chi, massage, meditation, music and art therapy. Check out this website for some stress reducing ideas:

[http://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-living/stress-management/in\\_depth/relaxation-technique](http://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-living/stress-management/in_depth/relaxation-technique)



## STAY AWARE

**Weight.** Maintain a healthy weight. Being overweight or obese also increases breast cancer risk, so Maintain a healthy Body Mass Index (BMI) between 18.5 and 24.9. This risk is especially pronounced in post-menopausal women.

## GET YOUR MAMMOGRAMS

Annual mammograms are recommended after the age of 40, and clinical breast exams should be performed annually. The density of your breasts matters and should guide the suggested imaging for you. While mammograms remain the gold standard for breast imaging, there are additional technologies for women with elevated risk and/or dense breasts like breast ultrasound, MRI and Tomosynthesis (3D mammography). Imaging works best when compared with previous results. Entrust the interpretation of your imaging to dedicated radiologists. Hoag has dedicated radiologists trained specifically in the interpretation of mammography and breast imaging. Know your results! It is a federal mandate that all women be notified of their results within 30 days and the result should include a comment regarding your breast density (which may make interpretation of your mammogram more difficult and also increase risk) and recommendations for follow-up screening.

**Know your Breasts.** Get to know the look and feel of your breasts and **speak up** if anything makes you nervous. You can also learn more about breast health and breast cancer prevention at any of these websites. Share what you learn with your family and friends to spread **awareness** and help others lower their risks!

- **Hoag Breast Program** - <http://www.hoag.org/know-your-risk>
- **Bright Pink** - <http://www.brightpink.org>
- **Susan G. Komen** – <http://www.komen.org>
- **American Cancer Society** – <http://www.cancer.org>
- **Breast Cancer Organization**- <http://www.breastcancer.org>
- **Sharsheret** - <http://www.sharsheret.org/>

**Meet With a Genetic Counselor.** If you have a family history of breast and/or ovarian cancer, a genetic counselor can help you interpret your family tree and further assess your lifetime risk of breast cancer. The counselor will also help determine if you may need to have a blood test that will tell us more about your genes.

**Preventive Medications.** Preventive medications can help you to stay cancer-free. Typically, these medications block the effects of estrogen (the hormone that influences the growth and development of many breast tumors) and are taken as a daily pill. As with any medication, there are benefits and risks to these preventive treatments. Preventive medications are typically prescribed under the supervision of a medical oncologist, who can help determine whether the addition of a medication to your care plan is right for you.

*To learn more about genetic counseling and/or preventive medications, please call our dedicated breast care nurse practitioner, Karen Herold, at (949)764-6337 for information, to obtain details of your individual risk assessment, and to ensure the accuracy of your results.*