

## Can Breast Cancer be Prevented?

by SusunW

By Susun Weed Sometimes it seems that every magazine, newspaper, radio show, and piece of mail has a headline declaring that every woman's risk of developing breast cancer is increasing. There is a numbing feeling of inevitability in these pronouncements. More and more women think about breast cancer as a when rather than an if. It's true that there's more breast cancer now than ever before, that between 1979 and 1986 the incidence of invasive breast cancer in the United States increased 29 percent among white women and 41 percent among black women, and incidence of all breast cancers doubled. It's true that the percentage of women dying from breast cancer has remained virtually unchanged over the past 50 years, and that every 12 minutes throughout the last half of the 20th Century another woman died of breast cancer. And it's true that breast cancer is the disease that women fear more than any other, that breast cancer is the biggest killer of all women aged 35 to 54, and that of the 2.5 million women currently diagnosed with breast cancer, half will be dead within ten years. These facts frighten me, and they also make me angry. My studies spanning 25 years and many disciplines have convinced me that the majority of breast cancers are causally related to the high levels of radiation and chemicals released into our air, water, soil, and food over the past 50 years. United States government researchers estimate that 80 percent of all cancers are environmentally linked. What can be done? The answer isn't as simple as a yearly mammogram. That may help detect breast cancer, but it won't prevent it. To prevent breast cancer we need to take individual and collective action. Effective action requires understanding the causes of breast cancer and what decreases breast cancer risk. But there are few conclusive answers to these queries, partly because most research focuses on eliminating breast cancer after - not before - it occurs. Science has validated so few risk factors for breast cancer that 70 percent of the women diagnosed with breast cancer have no identifiable risk factors. Unfortunately, our sex, age, reproductive history, family history, exposure to radiation (such as fallout from above-ground atomic bomb tests), race, culture, and height are beyond our control. When we're told these are the only risk factors, we can be left with feelings of hopelessness and panic. But when we include risk factors that are considered not well substantiated - but which are clearly contributing to breast cancer incidence - including ingestion of and exposure to prescription hormones, hormone-mimicking organochlorines, prescription drugs, petrochemicals, and electromagnetic fields, as well as unwise lifestyle choices such as smoking tobacco, drinking alcohol immoderately, wearing a bra, or not exercising, then we can find many ways to lower breast cancer risk. No need to panic. We can help prevent breast cancer on an individual basis by buying organically grown food, filtering our water, building powerful immunity, living wisely and vigorously, being in touch with our breasts, using natural remedies for menopausal problems, and by paying attention to our Wise Healer Within. But there's a limit to the control that any one woman has over her exposure to petrochemicals, radiation, and other environmental cancer-inciters. Limiting the production and discharge of substances that initiate and promote cancer is collective work. When our individual acts are combined with the acts of others, we can achieve the envisioned social change. For example, as I saw more and more evidence that chlorine residues from papermaking contribute to breast cancer, I began to ask for chlorine-free paper from my book printer. They went from amazement and puzzlement at my request to contracting with a new paper supplier who can provide them with elemental chlorine-free paper. (I'm not the only one asking, you see.) Whether you think your risk of breast cancer is high, low, or average, there are things you can do, individually and with others, to help yourself stay free of breast cancer and to help stop the epidemic of breast cancer too. (What is your risk of breast cancer? See Risk Assessment, page 317 of *Breast Cancer? Breast Health! the Wise Woman Way* to educate your guess.) Since 1950 the incidence of breast cancer in the U.S. has increased by 53 percent, according to Nancy Brinker, chair of President Clinton's Special Commission on Breast Cancer. \_\_\_\_\_

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1-845-246-8081 Vibrant, passionate, and involved, Susun Weed has garnered an international reputation for her groundbreaking lectures, teachings, and writings on health and nutrition. She challenges conventional medical approaches with humor, insight, and her vast encyclopedic knowledge of herbal medicine. Unabashedly pro-woman, her animated and enthusiastic lectures are engaging and often profoundly provocative. Susun is one of America's best-known authorities on herbal medicine and natural approaches to women's health. Her four best-selling books are recommended by expert herbalists and well-known physicians and are used and cherished by millions of women around the world. Learn more at <http://www.susunweed.com/>

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