

STEP 2

In the community - let's encourage our local bodies to clean up the wider environment

How? Breast Cancer Network has guidelines to assist - send for the next leaflets now*

We can ask our local bodies and/or central government to:

- reduce use of toxic chemicals
- use non-chemical methods of weed control
- minimise dioxin emissions
- eliminate other toxic emissions
- reduce vehicle emissions
- regulate for healthy building materials
- provide cancer prevention information
- promote healthy life-styles
- support organic food production
- tackle the problem of spray drift
- monitor NZers' body burden of chemicals
- do full chemical checks on our food
- require full labelling on foods and skin products
- keep NZ food GE free, as the long-term effects are not known

Help us meet the goals of **STOP CANCER WHERE IT STARTS**

**Less breast cancer for
New Zealand women****

**A healthier environment for our
families to live in.**

*Contact us now for the next leaflets in this series

- **More on reducing breast cancer risk**
- **Reducing breast cancer risk in the wider environment** - *an introduction to our Stop Cancer Where it Starts Action Kit*

Tell us which items you would like to receive leaflets, newsletter, membership form.

Send your name and address to:

Breast Cancer Network (NZ) Inc
P O Box 62 666, Kalmia St, Auckland
www.bcn.org.nz
Email us on brcanz@xtra.co.nz
or call us on 09 526 8853, fax 09 526 8860



Breast Cancer Network is an independent group of ordinary New Zealand women, most of whom have experienced breast cancer. We promote the issues and needs of those personally affected by breast cancer, advocate for improved treatment, and work towards preventing the disease for the benefit of the whole community. BCN urges all women to have regular breast checks by their doctor from their 20s onwards, and to join the free mammogram screening programme at age 45, or earlier if advised. Women of any age who notice or feel anything unusual about their breasts should see their doctor without delay.

****Breast cancer risk can be reduced, but not eliminated.** Prenatal and hereditary factors, individual hormone variations and other unknown factors influence risk. The recommendations in this leaflet and those that follow are likely to improve overall health, reduce breast cancer risk (and risk of other cancers) and contribute to making NZ a safer environment for ourselves and our children.

Introducing

STOP CANCER WHERE IT STARTS -

**A programme by
Breast Cancer Network which aims
to reduce the risk of breast cancer**

New Zealand women are very quietly sitting back and putting up with one of the highest rates of breast cancer in the world - and it's increasing.



What we know

- a small proportion of breast cancer is inherited
- certain risk factors affect incidence of the disease
- most breast cancer is loosely attributed to "the environment."

Science may take many years to understand fully what causes breast cancer, but can we wait that long to take action? Breast Cancer Network says we should take a "precautionary approach" - if something is suspected to increase breast cancer risk, let's aim to improve our chances and our daughters' chances by taking action now. We need to aim high because the stakes are high. Every year more than 2300 New Zealand women are diagnosed with breast cancer, and more than 600 women die.

Breast cancer takes many years to develop. We need to make a long-term, life-long plan and get started. Living and teaching our children a healthy lifestyle, and doing something for our environment can be our gift to the next generation

Stop Cancer Where it Starts suggests two levels of action - lifestyle actions that can be taken in the home, and an introduction to our wider vision - women taking a community approach and working with local bodies in reducing risk from the wider environment.

Why? Because many factors that contribute to risk are beyond an individual's personal control and can only be addressed on a much broader basis.

STEP 1

Life-style - Lets clean up our personal "environment"

How? By a precautionary approach - reducing risk factors and the daily exposure to chemicals, which may be harmful. These include endocrine disruptors -chemicals that act like hormones in the body.

Things you can change:

Your food and drink

- Eat less animal fats and meat (may increase breast cancer risk). Keep dairy intake moderate.
- Eat more fruit and veggies, (broccoli and highly coloured veggies particularly protective).
- Say Yes to cold-pressed olive oil (a Mediterranean diet is protective, but light olive oil, like all refined oils, may be harmful). Ideally avoid trans fats - in margarines, baked and processed foods.
- Avoid preserved meats (nitrate and nitrite preservatives convert to carcinogens in the body).
- Take less alcohol, (breast cancer incidence rises slightly with rising alcohol consumption).
- Yes to organics (less exposure to agrichemicals and possibly more nutritious).
- Avoid food additives (some under suspicion as endocrine disruptors).
- Say No to microwave cooking in plastic - avoid plastic wrap touching hot food (endocrine disruptor chemicals leach out of some plastics into food).

Skin care

- Read labels, avoid paraben preservatives, (found in breast tissue and still under investigation) mineral oils or paraffin (carry fat-soluble vitamins from the body, some mineral oils are carcinogens). Health shops offer safer skin products.

Lifestyle

- Be smoke-free (may affect risk), do exercise (lowers risk), watch your weight (obesity in post-menopausal women raises risk), avoid hormones where possible, (HRT raises risk if used for more than a short period, the Pill may raise risk slightly).
- Take care in the sun (sunburn may damage the immune system).
- Especially, protect children (to avoid later melanoma).
- Breast feed for as long as possible (every child breast-fed lowers a mothers' breast cancer risk).
- Less chemicals of all kinds - cleaners, solvents, insect sprays, perfumes (chemicals can be absorbed by the skin or breathed in - some are endocrine disruptors).
- Avoid garden sprays - seek less harmful alternatives, protect yourself fully if used (links to breast cancer found in animal studies).
- X-rays - have as few as possible (x-rays can cause breast cancer). Ask for protective lead garment for upper body when appropriate.

Your workplace

- Care with chemicals, use protective gear provided, ask for safety information.