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*The* **Health** *Guide*

# Your Healthy Breasts From A-to-Z

*By* **LAURIE HERR**

**WE ADMIT IT:** We have a love-hate relationship with our breasts. We show 'em off when they're proud and perky, but freak the second they start to sag. We squeeze them into bras that don't fit, complain if they bob when we jog, and obsess over every little imperfection. But the minute we find a lump or feel a twinge of pain, we realize just how much we want them around—no matter their flaws. That's why we created this A-to-Z Guide to help keep your breasts—and you—healthy.

## a | Alcohol

The numbers don't lie: Alcohol is to blame for 11 percent of all breast cancers, according to data from the United Kingdom's Million Women Study. That's because cocktails, beer, or wine—even just one or two drinks a day—hike your risk, and that risk increases with each additional drink. Scientists are still probing the alcohol-cancer connection but, for now, moderation is a must. "If you don't drink, don't start," says Susan Love, MD, president of the Dr. Susan Love Research Foundation and clinical professor of surgery at UCLA. "If you do, three drinks a week or less is probably OK."

**B | Breast-Feeding** / Yes, babies are more likely to attend college if they nurse, but what's really surprising: Breast-feeding may save *your* life. Women's Health Initiative data suggests that moms who breast-feed 12 months or more throughout their lives have less heart disease than women who don't nurse. And a new study shows that women with a family history of breast cancer cut their risks of getting the disease before menopause if they breast-feed their kids.

## C

**Caffeine** / You've heard there's a link between caffeine and breast cancer? The truth: About 200 to 300 milligrams of the stimulant per day—the amount in two to three cups of coffee or strong tea, an energy drink or two, or about five diet sodas—won't hurt you, says Liz Applegate, PhD, director of sports nutrition at the University of California, Davis. Still worried? As with anything, just don't overdo it.

**D | Dècolletage** There's a simple reason you see freckles, sun spots, and those dreaded vertical wrinkles on your cleavage—you're not using enough sunscreen on the delicate skin there. Baby your bosom with a high SPF, plus a moisturizer, says Amy Taub, MD, a Chicago-area dermatologist and assistant clinical professor at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine. Try Aveeno Positively Radiant Daily Moisturizer with SPF 30 ($13.99; drugstores). It offers sun protection and spot-reducing soy.

**E | Eat Right** / Loading up on fruits and veggies and cutting back on fatty meat keep your whole body healthy. But which foods specifically help you fight breast cancer? Recent studies suggest you eat more:

**Cruciferous vegetables** like broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, and bok choy. They contain potential cancer-fighting compounds called isothiocyanates.

**Fish** like salmon, tuna, and trout. They're rich in omega-3s and are a healthier protein source than meat.

**Bell peppers and broccoli** They're full of flavonoids, a powerful good-for-you antioxidant.

**Kefir yogurt** It's a yummy source of vitamin D and healthy bacteria (probiotics).

## F

**Fit** / If you're like most women, you're wearing a bra that doesn't fit right. Blame the fact that your bust measurements change at least six times in your adult life. To make sure you're getting the right support, talk to a fitter in a department or lingerie store, or do your own sizing. Elisabeth Squires, author of *Boobs: A Guide to Your Girls*, swears by Size Me Up! (GetSizedUp.com), a doctor-designed system that measures the width of each breast to more accurately determine cup size. When all else fails, take the no-duh test: A bra that fits right feels good and looks great.