

[IMAGE]

Body Fat and Breast Cancer

Several variables have been implicated as substantial risk factors for breast cancer, including family history of the disease and early onset of menstruation. Recent research also hints at a link between hormone replacement and breast cancer (See "Hormone Therapy May Contribute to Breast Cancer" in the April 2000 issue of *To Your Health*).

A study in the *American Journal of Epidemiology* reveals another possible contributor to this devastating disease: body fat distribution. As part of the Nurses' Health Study (1986-1994), 47,382 U.S. registered nurses reported their waist and hip circumferences at entrance and were monitored for the next eight years for incidence of breast cancer.

Increasing waist circumference was significantly related to breast cancer in postmenopausal, but not premenopausal, women. This association was maintained even when considering overall obesity and other breast cancer risk factors, and was even stronger among women who had never received hormone replacement therapy. Consult with a health care professional to learn how to minimize your risk of developing breast cancer.

Reference:

Huang Z, Willett WC, Colditz GA. Waist circumference, waist:hip ratio, and risk of breast cancer in the Nurses' Health Study. *American Journal of Epidemiology*, Dec. 1999: Vol. 150, No. 12, pp1316-24.

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