



As an African American woman this month which is Breast Cancer Awareness has recently hit home. A family member very close to me who I would not name was recently diagnosis with breast cancer. I was shock about this because this was never detected in my family. Sure my family has heart disease, diabetes, thyroid problems but breast cancer. No way! Once I was overcome by the shocking news I then started to analyze myself: What I am doing to prevent breast cancer? As a registered dietitian and semi-vegetarian, I felt that I had everything covered with what I ate and the daily jogging with my dogs for exercise. But once I really sat down and did a food and lifestyle journal I realized that I had a lot more changes to make.

I knew the statistics for African American which is breast cancer is more common in African American women; African American/Black women are most likely to die from the disease due to late stage detection and poorer stage specific survival. (This information was taken from American Cancer Society Cancer Facts & Figures for African Americans 2009-2010.) I always did my yearly mammograms and had a great report in my recent one but I was still in denial that this would happen in my family. The American Institute for Cancer Research 2007 Guidelines for Nutrition and Cancer Prevention shows that eating healthful diet, along with regular physical activity, can promote health and reduce the risk of developing cancer. Here are there ten guidelines suggestions for Cancer Prevention:

1. Be as lean as possible and aim to be at the lower end of the healthy BMI range. I know this is hard because in our culture it is ok to a little bit of thickness or something to cuddle. This extra fat is not going to help us in the long run so try to achieve and maintain a healthy weight for you size.
2. Be physically active for least 30 minutes every day. This consists of moderate activity which gets your heart beating a bit faster and makes you breathe more deeply- such as a brisk walk. It can also consist of vigorous activity which means raising our heart rates so that we warm up, start to seat, and feel out of breath. Be careful of not over doing with vigorous activity exercises and do check your heart rate.
  - a. Also include at least 15-30 minutes of relaxation –de-stressing exercises such as mediation, yoga, Qigong or Tai Chi.
3. Avoid sugary drinks such as sodas, kool aid and other high fructose corn syrup products.

4. Limit consumption of energy-dense foods (particularly processed foods high in added sugar, low in fiber, or high in fat).
5. Eat more of a variety of vegetables, fruits, whole grains and legumes such as beans.
  - a. Choose a diet with many types of plant-based foods. Try to substitute dried beans and peas for meat at some meals each week.
  - b. Try to eat at least five colorful servings a day of fruits and vegetables, including citrus fruits, dark-green and deep-yellow vegetables. Colorful vegetables and fruits contain natural health-promoting substances called phytochemicals .
6. Limit consumption of red meats and avoid processed meats. Limit high-fat foods, particularly those from animal sources.
  - a. Avoid beef, pork and lamb.
  - b. Choose lower-fat milk and dairy products.
  - c. Reduce the amounts of fat in your meals by choosing a lower-fat cooking method, such as baking and broiling.
7. If you consume alcoholic beverages at all please limit them. Limit drinks are 2 servings for men and 1 serving for women a day.
8. Limit consumption of salty foods and foods processed with salt (sodium). Try not to choose salt-cured, smoked and pickled foods less often.
9. Eat more high fiber foods such as whole grain breads and cereals each day!
10. Ask a registered dietitian to help you personalize a nutritious, balanced eating plan.

So please do not wait until breast cancer reaches to someone you love. Start a positive lifestyle change today and get an early detection mammogram today. Your health, body, mind and spirit will be glad that you did. For more information on Living Healthy please check out my website: [www.livinghealthy1.org](http://www.livinghealthy1.org) . Be Blessed!

Denine Rogers Rd, Ld