

Breast cancer risk actually decreases as women under 55 gain weight, study shows

A new, large-scale breast cancer study of women who had not yet reached menopause produced a surprising result: as body fat increased, their cancer risk decreased.

The finding runs directly counter to what we know about breast cancer risk in postmenopausal women, where the risk increases as a woman's body mass index, or BMI, climbs.

But for younger women it was the opposite.

...

Dr. [Hazel] Nichols and her team collected and analyzed data from 19 different studies that encompassed nearly 760,000 women younger than age 55. Researchers determined an inverse weight-risk relationship for those in this group.

...

[Y]ounger women should not take these findings as encouragement to gain weight as a protective measure.

"This study is not a reason to try to gain weight to prevent breast cancer," she stated. "Heavier women have a lower overall risk of breast cancer before menopause, but there are a lot of other benefits to managing a healthy weight that should be considered. What it does do is help us to try to understand what contributes to breast cancer risk in younger women."

Theorizing about the connection, Dr. Nichols says several factors could be contributing to the link: breast density, or hormone differences – including estrogen – where premenopausal levels are different from those measured after menopause occurs.

Read full, original post: [For Younger Women, Breast-Cancer Risk Lessens With Weight Gain, Study Finds](#)