

**RESEARCH SAVES LIVES**

Maintaining a healthy weight makes a difference when it comes to breast cancer:

- Being obese or overweight after menopause can increase your risk of breast cancer by as much as 30-60 percent.
- Being overweight or gaining weight after breast cancer diagnosis may increase the risk of cancer coming back (recurrence).
- Breast cancer survivors who are overweight tend to have a lower survival rate and quality of life compared to leaner survivors.



The higher risk of breast cancer for women who gain weight is likely due to higher levels of estrogen in the body. Fat cells make estrogen; extra fat cells result in more estrogen in the body and estrogen can make certain types of breast cancers develop and grow.

Still, the link between extra weight and breast cancer is complicated and affected by other factors. For example, the location of the extra weight matters. Extra fat around the belly area may increase risk more than the same amount of extra fat around the thighs or hips. In addition, weight affects the risk for pre- and postmenopausal women differently.

Exercise is one way to help maintain a healthy weight, though the benefits of exercise go beyond just weight loss. Women who get regular exercise may have a lower risk of getting breast cancer, a better chance of surviving breast cancer and a lower risk of having cancer recur. Regular exercise can also increase positive mood and improve physical condition, which in turn can enhance quality of life.

Learn more about obesity and breast cancer. <http://sgk.mn/1oI6eDn>

**OUR RESEARCH INVESTMENT:** (1982-2019)

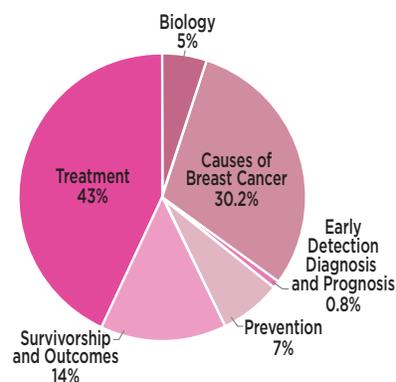
More than **\$45 million** in over **65 research grants** and more than **25 clinical trials** focused on obesity, weight and exercise

**What We're Investigating**

- Conducting a clinical trial—the *Breast cancer Weight Loss (BWEL)* study—to test whether a weight loss program can reduce the risk of recurrence in overweight or obese women with stage II-III breast cancer.
- Investigating how overweight and obesity affects breast cancer metastasis and whether obese breast cancer patients may benefit from obesity-specific therapies or dietary interventions.
- Determining how obesity and weight gain contributes to treatment resistance and breast cancer progression.



**Topic Area of Total Investment**



Read more about targeting obesity to prevent breast cancer from Komen-funded researchers at the University of Colorado Cancer Center, in Komen's Science Buzz series. <http://sgk.mn/NAN2Xj>

**WHAT WE'VE LEARNED from Komen-funded research**

- Drugs used to treat diabetes such as metformin may also help prevent breast cancer in some overweight or obese women.
- Exercise such as weight training or yoga may help breast cancer survivors reduce their body fat or improve their quality of life by reducing side effects of treatment.
- Obesity promotes the way ER+ tumors progress and become resistant to therapy through a protein called FGFR1, which may be targeted to overcome obesity-related drug resistance. [Read more.](#)

Learn more about breast cancer

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