

TABLE 2**Extra cases of breast cancer, by risk factor**

RISK FACTOR	BREAST CANCERS DIAGNOSED OVER 20 YEARS FROM AGES 50 TO 70 (PER 1,000)	EXTRA BREAST CANCERS (PER 1,000)
Never used HRT	45	-
>5 years HRT	47	2
>10 years HRT	51	6
>15 years HRT	57	12
Late menopause (age 60)	59	14
Alcohol (2 drinks/day)	72	27
No daily exercise	72	27
Weight gain (>20 kg)	90	45

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FAST TRACK**Top 3 risk factors
for breast cancer:****1 Obesity****1 No daily exercise****1 More than 2
alcoholic drinks
daily****1 No cause and effect
for HRT and breast cancer**

Nothing frightens women as much as breast cancer, and articles focusing on the relationship between breast cancer and HRT have drawn widespread attention. However, despite voluminous literature, the etiology of breast cancer remains elusive—and there is no evidence that either estrogen or progestins cause the disease.^{45,46} Rather, there is only an association between the use of estrogen, progestin, and breast cancer. Linking the finding of an increased risk with an implication of causality would be inappropriate.

**Breast cancer risk with HRT is not
consistently elevated, in studies**

In fact, a qualitative review of observational studies from 1975 to 2000 found no significant increase or decrease in the risk of breast cancer with estrogen or estrogen-progestin in 80% of the reports.⁴⁷

Risk factors for breast cancer (TABLE 1) include family history, obesity, late child-birth, and hormone therapy—but obesity and family history have higher relative risks than the use of HRT.⁴⁸

WHI arms find different risks

In the widely publicized WHI, women in the estrogen-progestin arm had an overall relative hazard for breast cancer of 1.24 (95% CI 1.01-1.54), but there was no