

Transcript Details

This is a transcript of an educational program. Details about the program and additional media formats for the program are accessible by visiting: <https://reachmd.com/programs/project-oncology/breast-cancer-survivorship-lifestyle-medicine/50996/>

ReachMD

www.reachmd.com
info@reachmd.com
(866) 423-7849

Breast Cancer Survivorship: Why Lifestyle Medicine Matters

Announcer:

This is *Project Oncology* on ReachMD, and on this episode, we'll hear from Dr. Amy Comander. Not only is Dr. Comander the Medical Director of the Mass General Cancer Center in Waltham, but she also serves as the Director of the Breast Oncology Program at Newton-Wellesley Hospital. She'll be examining the importance of lifestyle medicine in breast cancer survivorship, which she spoke about at the 2026 American Society of Clinical Oncology Annual Meeting. Let's hear from Dr. Comander now.

Dr. Comander:

So we know that ASCO and the American Cancer Society have highlighted key components of breast cancer survivorship care, and these are items that we focus on in each visit with our patients—namely, surveillance for recurrence, screening for a new primary cancer, addressing genetic counseling and whether testing should be updated, monitoring and managing long-term and late-effects of treatment, psychosocial support, care coordination, and then health promotion.

So health promotion is also a key pillar of the American Cancer Society and ASCO guideline, which really focuses on the need to discuss with our patients the important role of physical activity, maintaining a healthy diet, achieving healthy body weight, and avoiding tobacco use. And we know that each of these pillars of lifestyle medicine is absolutely essential for comprehensive breast cancer survivorship care.

One great study that highlights the important role of lifestyle interventions for breast cancer survivors is the DELCAP Study, and that stands for the Diet, Exercise, Lifestyle, and Cancer Prognosis Study. So this was a prospective observational cohort study, which involved over 1,300 women with high-risk breast cancer. They needed chemotherapy, and they were followed for a median amount of time of close to eight years. And as part of this study, they were assessed in terms of something called the Healthy Lifestyle Index, which looked at a number of important domains, namely physical activity, BMI, fruit and vegetable consumption, red and processed meat intake, sugar-sweetened beverage consumption, alcohol consumption, and smoking. And they assessed these particular lifestyle factors at four different time points: before diagnosis, during treatment, and one and two years after treatment.

Those who had a healthier lifestyle or a higher Lifestyle Index score ended up having significant improvement in outcome. Namely, those who had the highest adherence to these Lifestyle Index scores had a significant improvement in disease recurrence—a 37 percent reduction in disease recurrence—and a significant improvement in all-cause mortality—a 58 percent reduction. So this study really emphasizes the importance of adherence to healthy lifestyle behaviors for individuals with a history of high-risk breast cancer.

Announcer:

That was Dr. Amy Comander talking about the role of lifestyle medicine in breast cancer survivorship. To access this and other episodes in our series, visit *Project Oncology* on ReachMD.com, where you can Be Part of the Knowledge. Thanks for listening!