How to Cut Your Breast Cancer Risk Naturally
(An Interview with Dr. Christine Horner)

By Dr. Joseph Mercola

DM: Dr. Joseph Mercola
CH: Dr. Christine Horner

Introduction:

DM: Welcome, everyone. This is Dr. Mercola, and today we’re honored to have Dr. Christine Horner with us. She has an interesting journey in her health experience and is going to talk to us today about some of the diagnostic screenings that are currently available for breast cancer, which she is quite familiar with and is really an expert on.

So, we’re delighted to have you. Welcome. I’m glad you could join us.

CH: Thank you. It’s my pleasure. Well, the initial thing was the fact that my mom had breast cancer. She actually had her first battle with it when I was in college, a million years ago. They had caught it when it was fairly early. She had a mastectomy and did fine. They were checking her, as you can imagine, since she’d had breast cancer very frequently – every six months or so. She was doing everything that Western medicine told her to do, as far as mammograms, breast exams, and so forth.

About 13 years later, they found another tumor that was on the opposite site. Now again, they were checking her frequently. They caught it when it was less than a centimeter. All of her tumor markers were favorable. She didn’t have any lymph node metastasis. Once again, she got treated, and we thought she’s going to be fine.

And then about five years after that, she suddenly was having pain in her leg. When I saw her, I thought… Also she got checked and she had a metastasis to her femur. She didn’t want to live. She just gave up. She didn’t want any treatment. She died about nine months after that.

That’s the thing that really rocked my world. Because what had happened in the interim is I had started my plastic surgery practice. Because my mom had had breast cancer, I thought, well, I’d get active with the American Cancer Society. I was the spokesperson for the American Cancer Society on breast cancer issues. I was trained to say, “We don’t know what causes it. We don’t have any known cures. The best things that women can do are mammograms and breast exams in the hope of catching it early to save lives.” It was like, “Well, that didn’t work for my mom.”

And then what I noticed at my practice is that my patients started getting younger and younger and younger. Finally, I was doing women in their 20s. I just thought, you know, something is way wrong with this picture.
I started going through the medical literature and the research just to see if there was anything we could find that would have an association if women did or avoided, it would significantly reduce the risk of developing breast cancer. I had no idea what I was going to find because back then, it wasn’t something that was being talked about much. I thought that the medical literature was mostly sponsored by pharmaceutical companies, right?

When I got in there and started looking, I instantly found thousands of studies that show exactly why we have a breast cancer epidemic, prostate cancer, colon cancer, heart disease, and so forth, and everything that we’re doing that contribute to it and the things that we traditionally don’t do in this culture that are highly protective. And they were all natural. It’s food, supplements, herbs, diet, and lifestyle.

All of the things I was trained in my medical training that didn’t make a difference, right? I’m board certified in general surgery and plastic surgery. The seven years of residency plus four years of medical training was something, like, okay, there’s 11 years of training in there. I didn’t have a single course in nutrition. I learned nothing about health – nothing. All I learned was how to suppress symptoms with pharmaceutical medications or cut it out.

It wasn’t until I discovered that there was such an association with diet, herbs, lifestyle, and emotions, too. I mean, everything just affects us. But it wasn’t until I discovered that that I thought, okay, these are actually the real secrets to health.

I got trained in Ayurveda, which is a traditional system of medicine from India. “Ayur” means life and “veda” means knowledge, so it literally means the knowledge of life. It’s like, how different is that from Western medicine? It really teaches us about the principles of that. It’s kind of like an owner’s manual for the human body about natural laws that we need to follow in order to bring our bodies into balance and enhance our bodies and our healing intelligence. That’s what keeps us well.

Most people are familiar with Ayurveda, even if they think that they haven’t been, because yoga, herbs, meditation, these things all originated from them. They’re really the keys about how to become and stay healthy, and really have an extraordinary state of health.

That’s where my career changed, I have to say. Learning all these things, I thought there are so many simple things that people can do that they don’t know. It’s like we’re telling them lies. It’s not like we think their lies, but we’ve been trained that way. We’re telling our patients, “Oh, you can always take this drug or do that drug when there are so many simple things that they can do that won’t harm them or have bad side effects.

I thought they really need to know this. I thought, really, my passion is teaching people how to become healthy and stay healthy naturally. I decided to quit my practice and dedicate myself to doing just that: going out and talking with people about what they can do – the simple things that they can do – and have a dramatic impact on their life.

With all my research in the area of breast cancer, I thought the first thing I’m going to do is write a book on all the natural approaches to protecting against and fighting breast cancer, because definitely we have the information out there to end the breast cancer epidemic. No question about it.
Getting mammograms and saying, “Okay, We need to get them every year, every two years,” or whatever. There are no instructions about anything that you can do to lower your risk. For me, it was like, so, you go in and it’s a game of Russian roulette. What year is it going to get me? Because I had so much work with breast cancer patients, you know, all I see are breast cancer patients. Your view of the world gets skewed when you’re seeing so much of that.

For me, it was not a matter of, “If I was going to get breast cancer,” but “When I was going to it,” is how I was feeling. I thought, “Okay, that’s not really a good place to be.” To go in and feel like there’s nothing you can do and you’re playing this game of Russian roulette again, it’s the most disempowering thing. I thought, “I don’t want to live my life that way.” When my mom died of breast cancer…

Again, I’m looking at my patients getting younger and younger and younger. Even if they’re following what’s said… You get your mammogram. In young ages, it’s not so good because you can’t really see through the breast tissue with that. A lot of times people are present with tumors that weren’t caught that way, you know. They have to have surgery, maybe a mutilating surgery, and additional treatments on top of that even if they have a stage one disease. With that, it’s like, well, that’s not how I want to live my life.

That was another huge impetus, where I thought there’s got to be a way where we can empower women to do things that can help dramatically lower the risk, and there are so many things I can do. I mean, the really exciting thing I found when I went through the medical literature is that no matter what they tested, it would cut your risk in half. So, you have a terrible diet and lifestyle. You do one thing, you cut your risk in half. You do more than one thing, those things will multiply up together; they would add up together.

It becomes incredibly simple to dramatically lower your risk of developing this disease. And then it takes the fear away. We don’t have to be so afraid of this horrible disease. Why is this happening? There’s nothing you can do. You’re just going to be a victim to it. It’s like, no, this is something where we do have tremendous power in dramatically lowering our risk.

I met a woman doctor there who was doing thermography. She introduced me to it. Then I thought, “Wow, this is like an amazing technology where you can see these physiological changes.” It’s not anatomic. It’s these physiological changes that occur years before you would ever get breast cancer that forms.

All the screening tools that we have right now are not preventative. I mean, it drives me crazy when they say, “Oh, breast cancer prevention: get your mammogram.” That’s not prevention. It’s picking up something after you already have it and all the other things really do, too. I mean, as far as MRI, ultrasounds, and so forth.

Thermography is the only tool that we have that will actually pick up physiological changes years before you would have a progression to breast cancer. To me, it’s this incredibly useful tool, where you could pinpoint them up before they have it. That eliminates a lot of the fear. You empower them like, “Hey, these are the things you need to do in order to reverse that.” And then you can show them in eight to 10 weeks, where you’ve got reversals, which is incredibly stimulating for people to take care of themselves.
One of the most exciting and important uses for thermography, I believe, is being able to use it on young women. Mammograms don’t work on women usually 40 and under because their breast tissue is too dense. Plus, the other really scary thing about it is that when our breast tissue’s younger, it’s more sensitive to radiation. If you’re getting mammograms when you’re younger, it’s far more damaging. We know that radiation is a contributor to the cause of breast cancer. It’s like why do you do a test that uses something that actually causes that disease? Hello? Early on, it’s worthless.

People who are 20, 30, 40… Even now we’re getting the recommendations saying, “Well, maybe you ought to do it every two years.” Why? Because the statistics now show that it’s actually making such a great impact.

For me, it’s a wonderful use for thermography to actually take it in to, let’s say, college campuses. We introduce it to women when they’re young and educate them about something that we can use – completely harmless. It’s just a picture of the breast, but it shows us the physiological state (if you have inflammation or not) that is important for every chronic disease in the body, including diabetes, which we’re having an unbelievable epidemic of.

But you can do this and then also educate them early about what you need to avoid, what you need to favor, and what impacts it. Because youthful people, they think that they’re invincible. They can eat horrible stuff, drink excessively, and they’re going to be okay. But like I said, I was actually working on women in their 20s.

The earlier we can get them, the earlier we can get them involved in their own health. Really, it’s something that’s going to allow them to have a tremendous change in their overall health. To me, it’s such a great access point to get young people to get interested in their health and start making healthy changes.

The history of medicine is really kind of interesting. Because long ago and far away in the land of India and China, they wouldn’t even pay their physician if they were sick, right? They got paid if you were well. It was a paradigm where the patient was always working with the physician on creating the best health that they could.

Somehow during the early 1900s, say, particularly in this country, it became this very patriarchal kind of relationship where the doctor was God, the doctor knows all, the doctor will tell you like a parent, “You do this,” and you have to be this completely disempowered, childlike person that has absolute no say or whatsoever to his health.

That doesn’t work very well. And really, the ancient cultures knew much better as far as allowing each individual to work with the physician, doing things about understanding their own individual health and what they need to do to become as healthy as they possibly can.

My message to women, particularly when we talk about breast cancer, is that you have an extraordinary power in lowering your risk of this disease, which all too prevalent in our culture. And that there are so many simple things that you can do, so you do one thing – again, one thing – and you can cut your risk in half. If you do more than one thing, those things will multiply up together. They don’t add up together. It becomes incredibly simple to dramatically lower your risk. The side benefit is that you feel better and better and better.
It’s simple. It’s not complex. There’s great information out there, which you can find in my book, *Waking the Warrior Goddess* (your internal healing intelligence), or my website, which is DrChristineHorner.com.