

# What the Medical and Lingerie Industries Don't Want you to Know about Breast Cancer



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*Editor's Note:*

*This article, first entitled, "Bras Cause More than Breast Cancer: Preliminary Results of the International Bra-Free Study", was shadow banned from Facebook, where it was being shared and gaining traction with interested readers. The link between tight clothing and disease, including the bra-cancer link, is well known and supported by numerous studies. However, the cultural impacts of this information affects numerous powerful industries, including the healthcare industry which has been ignoring this issue. Medicine is more political than scientific these days, with the money being put on developing new ways to detect and treat disease, rather than discovering the cause of disease to prevent its occurrence. And when industries face potential class-action lawsuits for product liability, there is a strong financial incentive and public relations effort to suppress information that reveals product-caused harms. As a result of these cultural factors, the bra-cancer link, which was recognized since there were bras, is now considered "fake news" and is being censored by those who have the most to lose from its announcement. Our goal is to warn women about this link between bra usage and disease, and we will continue to attempt to warn women about this issue despite 25 years of resistance which we have had to fight since we first announced the results of our groundbreaking 1991-93 US Bra and Breast Cancer Study, which is detailed in our updated 2nd edition of our book, *Dressed to Kill: The Link Between Breast Cancer and Bras*.*

*We are re-releasing this article with a new title, hoping to get past the censorship. We ask the reader to share this information with others, since grassroots efforts are essential to spread this message past institutional censorship. Fortunately, women can stop wearing bras and discover an almost immediate improvement in health, which is what we have seen from the International Bra-Free Study, whose preliminary results we are reporting in this article.*

## **Introduction**

If you are a woman, then there is important information you need to know to keep healthy and avoid disease. This is information that you should be told by your doctor and other health professionals, but many of these professionals simply don't have this information.

The issue pertains to the wearing of tight clothing. Studies, and common sense, tell us that wearing anything tight is bad for health. Tight clothing compresses our soft body tissues, impairing the function of blood vessels, lymphatic vessels, nerves, and more. Research shows tight neckties, tight pants, girdles, corsets, bras, and other compression garments can cause serious harm.

The purpose of the International Bra-Free Study is to assess the changes a woman experiences once she stops using bras. The study began in 2018 and is still recruiting participants from around the world. Participants pledge to stop using bras and their progress is followed through open and closed-ended questions. The study is ongoing, but we have seen some amazing patterns in the experience of women who stop wearing bras. We believe it is extremely important to share these preliminary findings with the public at this time, hoping to warn as many women as possible about the effect of bra usage on health.

We started our study considering the effect of bras on breasts, and expected improvement in breast pain, cysts, and reduced cancer incidence in our group of bra-free women. What we discovered was that, in addition to the above, we also found that women recovered from many other bodily ailments that seemed completely unrelated to bra usage.

We are discovering the many ways tight bras harm health, including every part of the body. As you will see, bras cause more than breast disease.

## **Background**

Much of fashion is about altering the body to achieve a culturally-defined shape. When tight garments cause disease, the fashion industry opposes the research revealing the disease, and the medical industry gets caught in the middle. Medicine is a business that profits from the detection and treatment of disease, and makes money when people are sick, not well. This conflict of

interest helps perpetuate harmful cultural practices, such as wearing tight clothing, since medicine, and the culture in general, are influenced more by industry and money than by health.

Bras have been shown in numerous studies to contribute to breast cancer incidence. While the link between breast cancer and bras has been recognized by doctors since bras became popular in the early 20th Century<sup>1</sup>, cultural acceptance of the bra and extensive promotion by the fashion and lingerie industries have eclipsed information that bras pose a significant threat to health.

When cultural influences from industry and social practices bias human behavior and cause disease, the resulting disease can be called “culturogenic”. Breast cancer is mostly a culturogenic disease, with a small (less than 10%) genetic component, and a large cultural-environmental component. These non-genetic causes of breast cancer include exposure to environmental carcinogens and x-rays (including mammograms), along with direct inhibition of the breast lymphatic system by tight bra usage.

### **How Bras Cause Breast Cancer**

Impaired lymphatics is central to the etiology of breast cancer. The lymphatic system is part of the immune system, and is responsible for the circulation of interstitial fluid. This fluid develops from the bloodstream, delivering nutrition and oxygen to the cells, along with toxins that are in the bloodstream as a result of contaminants in our air, water, and food. The lymphatic system consists of microscopic vessels with one-way valves that lead to lymph nodes. Lymph fluid passively passes into lymphatic vessels to be eliminated from the tissue, inspected by the lymph nodes, and returned to the bloodstream.

Waste products from cellular metabolism, along with toxins delivered to the cells from our petrochemically-polluted air, food, and water, are removed from the tissues by the lymphatic system. In addition, pathogens and cancer cells are also swept through the lymphatics to the lymph nodes, where an immune response is elicited.

However, when the tiny, easily-compressed lymphatic vessels are constricted by tight bras, this fluid channel becomes restricted, causing a variety of problems. Most women who wear bras experience breast pain and cysts as a result of this lymphatic impairment. In addition, the resulting lymph-stasis and lymph congestion of the tissue results in reduced toxin elimination, causing the progressive toxification of the breasts. The local tissue environment becomes low in

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<sup>1</sup> For example, Dr. John Mayo, one of the founders of the Mayo Clinic, wrote in the article “Susceptibility to Cancer” in the 1931 *Annals of Surgery*, that “Cancer of the breast occurs largely among civilized women. In those countries where breasts are allowed to be exposed, that is, are not compressed or irritated by clothing, it is rare.” A bra patent in 1950 stated, “Even in the proper breast size, most brassieres envelop or bind the breast in such a fashion that normal circulation and freedom of movement is constricted. Many cases of breast cancer have been attributed to such breast constriction as caused by improperly fitted brassieres.” (Taken from the 2018 edition of *Dressed to Kill*.)

oxygen, reducing the body's ability to process free radicals. The resulting accumulation of endogenous and exogenous toxins increases cancer risk significantly.

According to our 1991-93 US Bra and Breast Cancer Study, published in our book, *Dressed to Kill: The Link Between Breast Cancer and Bras*, the bra-cancer link is the major cause of breast cancer. This study concluded that bra-free women have about the same risk of breast cancer as men, while the tighter and longer the bra is worn the higher the risk rises, to 125 times higher for a 24/7 bra user compared to a bra-free woman.

This was the world's first study that looked directly at the bra-cancer link. A 1991 study from Harvard found pre-menopausal bra-free women had half the risk of breast cancer compared to bra users, but this finding was incidental to the main focus of the study, which was on breast size, handedness, and breast cancer incidence.

Since the release of *Dressed to Kill* in 1995, there have been dozens of other bra-cancer studies performed internationally that show a significant link. However, this issue is considered "controversial" due to its potential cultural and economic impact, similar to resistance to the tobacco-cancer link back in the mid-20th Century. Current opponents of the bra-cancer link include thought leaders such as the American Cancer Society<sup>2</sup> and Susan G. Komen Foundation<sup>3</sup>, which have publicly called the link scientifically implausible.

### **Figures Don't Lie, but Liars Figure**

Critics of the bra-cancer link refer to a 2014 study that was commissioned by the National Cancer Institute, which has been denying any possibility of a bra-cancer link since the release of *Dressed to Kill*. Due to public acceptance of the link, NCI felt it necessary to counter the studies showing a link by funding a study to oppose the link. This study was done at Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, which raises money for breast cancer research through promoting "Bra Dash" events<sup>4</sup>. The study was done on post-menopausal women only, and none of the women were bra-free, so there was no control group. The author of the study, who is a female graduate student who also wore bras, unsurprisingly found no bra-cancer link in her selected group of bra users.

This single, un-reproduced, flawed study has been used by the ACS and Komen Foundation, and others who follow them, as final proof of no bra-cancer link. While conflicting studies are typical of scientific research, this one study has been considered the first and last word on this issue by

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/breast-cancer/risk-and-prevention/disproven-or-controversial-breast-cancer-risk-factors.html>

<sup>3</sup> <https://ww5.komen.org/BreastCancer/FactorsThatDoNotIncreaseRisk.html>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.maplevalleyreporter.com/news/search-for-answers-at-heart-of-bra-dash-5k/>

the cancer “experts” who deny the bra-cancer link. This study clearly serves the interests of the cancer detection and treatment industry, as well as the lingerie industry which fears class action lawsuits for the harms caused by bras.

Nevertheless, since that attempt to stop interest in the bra-cancer link in 2014, there have been many newer studies that show the link.<sup>5</sup> And a recent trend in breast cancer research is asking about bra usage as a standard question, just like asking about family history. In fact, a recent study from Iran shows bra usage is a bigger factor in causing breast cancer than family history.<sup>6</sup>

Culturally, bra usage has been questioned as a result of the #MeToo movement that has been challenging sexism and abuse in the workplace. Many women are now opting for being comfortable and bra-free at work, as well as in their everyday lives. Girls in high school are objecting to dress codes that require bras. And the general legal consensus is that women at work cannot be forced to wear sexualizing clothing, including high heels, short skirts, and bras.<sup>7</sup> These trends are making it easier for the culture to accept the fact that bras are causing disease.

Perhaps the biggest impediment to this potentially lifesaving information is the resistance from the medical field, such as the ACS and others who follow their lead. We discuss in the 2018, updated, second edition of *Dressed to Kill* why we believe there is this resistance to this information, instead of a call for further research. Regardless of the reason, this unscientific, biased opposition to the bra-cancer link is a public health threat.

It is to combat this threat to health that we began the International Bra-Free Study in 2018. This study, which is free to join, is designed to create a cohort of bra-free women in order to see what happens to their breast health over time. While the study accepts women who have been bra-free for years, most of our participants have been bra users, allowing us to see what changes happen to their breasts and overall health once they stop using bras.

While this study is expected to help women avoid breast cancer and other breast disease associated with bra usage, the women in our study could also be available for other breast studies which require bra-free women. One big flaw in breast cancer and other breast disease research is that bra usage has been ignored as a factor. This is as scientifically flawed as ignoring smoking

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.academia.edu/36287546/>  
HOW BRAS CAUSE LYMPH STASIS AND BREAST CANCER

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.academia.edu/38566926/>  
Should Bra Usage Become a Standard Question in Breast Cancer Research New Study From Iran Says Yes

<sup>7</sup> [https://www.academia.edu/38702156/Bra-Free\\_at\\_Work\\_Ending\\_Sexist\\_and\\_Illegal\\_Dress\\_Codes](https://www.academia.edu/38702156/Bra-Free_at_Work_Ending_Sexist_and_Illegal_Dress_Codes)

when doing lung disease research, which was the case prior to the acceptance of the tobacco-cancer link.

The 2014 Hutchinson study did not include any bra-free women as a control group, which that study admits is a flaw. They rationalize that flaw by saying that it was nearly impossible to find bra-free women for their study. Of course, you cannot do a valid breast cancer study looking at the bra-cancer link without including a control group of bra-free women for comparison. So instead of conducting poor breast cancer research without control groups, we hope to offer our study participants for possible inclusion in their future studies.

The response from the medical industry was swift after we announced our International Bra-Free Study. The American Council on Science and Health, a public relations firm that aims to dismiss and discredit all those who challenge the interests of the drug industry, published a hit piece against me and the study.<sup>8</sup> Ironically, they claimed the study is flawed by not including a control group of bra users. Of course, there is no control group defined for a prospective cohort study.

Nevertheless, despite the resistance by the medical industry over the years, many women have heard about the bra-cancer link and have stopped wearing bras. Many have joined the International Bra-Free Study. We expect that this group of women will have a lower incidence of breast cancer than the general public.

However, we have discovered something unexpected in the study. There have been some definite health changes following the elimination of bra usage, and while the study is ongoing, we felt it important to report these surprising findings.

### **Bras Constrict More Than the Lymphatics**

First, we must explain that tight bras compress more than just the lymphatics. They also compress nerves and muscles. In fact, research has shown that wearing tight bras impairs the autonomic nervous system, leading to a host of problems.

For example, researchers have found that tight bras essentially create a full-body stress response. According to one study<sup>9</sup>, “The main results can be summarized as follows: (1) urinary excretion of adrenaline, noradrenaline and cortisol was facilitated, and the amounts of urinary excretion were significantly higher when TC (tight clothing) were worn. Heart rate was significantly higher in the TC group; (2) nocturnal urinary melatonin excretion was significantly greater in the TC group. These results are discussed in terms of an enhancement of diurnal sympathetic nervous system activity caused by pressure on the skin produced by tight clothing.”

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.acsh.org/news/2018/03/29/bra-free-activist-seeks-free-boobing-women-sham-breast-cancer-study-12776>

<sup>9</sup> <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s00484-002-0145-z>

Another study of tight bras found that constipation is a result<sup>10</sup>, presumably due to suppression of the parasympathetic nervous system and intestinal mobility.

Another study<sup>11</sup> found that women who were bra-free had shorter menstrual cycles, averaging 30 days, compared to bra users, whose menstrual cycle averaged 45 days.

A study also found that tight clothing hampers breathing<sup>12</sup>, reducing lung expansion, inhalation volume, and deep breathing.

Research has also shown that breasts lift and tone once the bra is no longer worn.<sup>13</sup> The study author concluded, "Medically, physiologically, anatomically - breasts gain no benefit from being denied gravity. On the contrary, they get saggier with a bra." While this scientific finding stands in contrast to bra-industry propaganda claiming that bras prevent droop, the science behind the bra-causes-droop effect is that reliance on the bra results in weakened suspensory ligaments and more droop. Once the bra is no longer worn, the ligaments strengthen and the breasts lift and tone. In addition, bras make the breasts heavy with excess fluid due to lymphatic impairment, resulting in more pendulous breasts.

### **Surprising Results of the International Bra-Free Study**

I must admit that before we started the International Bra-Free Study in 2018, we thought we already knew what to expect when women stopped wearing bras. Since we first announced the results of our research in 1995, women have stopped wearing bras and have reported to us that their breast pain and cysts disappeared. In fact, this surprising recovery was rapid, within a month of no longer wearing bras. Many times, women felt a big improvement in pain and cysts within days of ending the bra-caused constriction of their breasts. Indeed, this tangible self-demonstration of the harm caused by bras has kept this issue alive despite denials of any ill-effects from bras by the cancer industry.

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<sup>10</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/11037693>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1076/brhm.33.3.279.8255>

<sup>12</sup> [https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Erik\\_Peper/publication/21224253\\_The\\_effect\\_of\\_clothing\\_on\\_inhalation\\_volume/links/53d2e4650cf228d363e96c78.pdf](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Erik_Peper/publication/21224253_The_effect_of_clothing_on_inhalation_volume/links/53d2e4650cf228d363e96c78.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/259073.php>

But we had no idea how many other problems would improve by not wearing bras, until we started the International Bra-Free Study. While the study is ongoing, we feel that it is imperative that women learn how bras can interfere with their health, to take proper precautionary measures.

From the hundreds of women who are part of this study, with more joining daily, it has become clear that bras cause more than breast disease.

Everyone has reported reduction of breast pain and cysts, if they had them before starting the study. In no case has breast pain or cysts worsened.

Most report that their breasts are less saggy, and are rounder. Some report that their nipples now have more feeling than when they wore bras.

Every woman reports that she breathes easier without a bra.

Most women report that their digestion has improved.

Women who had shoulder pain with a bra report loss of that pain once being bra-free.

Many women report loss of headaches since being bra-free.

Most women report having more confidence in public without a bra, and a greater sense of confidence and empowerment.

Women in the study report they have no problem being bra-free at work, and appreciate the comfort.

Most women report that they like their breasts more since being bra-free.

Most report friends and family supporting their decision to be bra-free.

Surprisingly, being bra-free does not seem to alter these women's sex lives.

Some women reported that their menstrual cycles became shorter and normalized after being bra-free.

Importantly, not one participant has experienced any negative effects of being bra-free.

We also found that once women freed themselves from bras, they began to free themselves from other oppressive aspects of their lives. As one participant explained, "I am more confident, I like my breasts now, and I want to advocate for girls and women to understand the link between bras and cancer and how easy, rewarding and healthful it can be to feel this comfortable. I am more empowered now, too."

## **To Be Continued...**

It should be clear that when you use a garment that compresses and constricts the lymphatic system and the autonomic nervous system, you are potentially altering the physiology of the breasts and of the entire body. Breast cancer may be the end disease for the breasts, but there will also be other disease conditions caused by tight bras, and other tight clothing, that can lead to nervous, hormonal, and circulatory problems.

When we first researched the bra-cancer link, we were surprised at how little research there was on the subject. Many people assume there can't be a bra-cancer link, or they would have heard about it. People assume that the American Cancer Society would be warning women about bras if there was research that linked bra usage to cancer, just like the ACS finally got to warning people about smoking (after taking decades to finally accept the link.) But we are not just dealing with smoking. When we talk about bras, we are talking about breasts. And in our breast-obsessed culture, breasts are sexualized, objectified, molded, squeezed, sucked, compressed, constricted, pushed-up, tattooed, pierced, implanted, cut off, and framed in a lacy bra. It's a cultural package that interferes with science and common sense. And even as doctors smoked cigarettes in the 1950s and promoted their use, doctors today wear bras and promote their use, oblivious to the obvious.

We are all victims of a bra-using culture. As a result, there is an epidemic of breast pain and cysts that affects more than half of women who use bras. Most of this is caused by the bra and improves rapidly once bra usage ends.

Some women will develop breast cancer as a result of a bra-constricted lymphatic system and exposure to cancer-causing chemicals, which consequently become concentrated in their breasts. Radiation damage and other harmful impacts, such as trauma, to the breasts cannot be as effectively repaired when the lymphatics are constricted by bras. And the immune system cannot as effectively fight developing cancer cells without good lymphatic circulation.

Through the International Bra-Free Study, we have also seen confirmation of other research into the effects of tight clothing, including bras, on various bodily functions, due to impacts on the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems. This means that women are suffering from constipation, shallow breathing, increased stress, menstrual abnormalities, and other possible problems because of their bras.

How tight is tight? If it leaves a mark in the skin, then it is too tight.

While the impact of bras on the autonomic nervous system has been known for decades, it has been largely ignored, along with research showing the other health hazards of bras. When a carcinogen is part of the fabric of the culture, it takes ripping the culture apart to remove it.

Denial is a much easier and profitable strategy for the industries that sell bras, and sell disease detection and treatment services.

We encourage women everywhere to join the International Bra-Free Study and see for themselves, on themselves, how chronic health problems that plagued them for years could be related to the cultural practice of wearing tight bras and other tight clothing. You have nothing to lose but your discomfort and chronic health problems, and this almost certainly will help you prevent breast cancer.

Join the International Bra-Free Study at <https://brafreestudy.com>.

#### SOME STUDIES THAT SUPPORT THE BRA-CANCER LINK<sup>14</sup>

- 1991 Harvard study (CC Hsieh, D Trichopoulos (1991). Breast size, handedness and breast cancer risk. European Journal of Cancer and Clinical Oncology 27(2):131-135.). This study found that, “Premenopausal women who do not wear bras had half the risk of breast cancer compared with bra users...”
- 1991-93 U.S. Bra and Breast Cancer Study by Singer and Grismaijer, published in Dressed To Kill: The Link Between Breast Cancer and Bras (Second Edition, Square One Publishers, 2018). Found that bra-free women have about the same incidence of breast cancer as men. 24/7 bra wearing increases incidence over 100 times that of a bra-free woman.
- Singer and Grismaijer did a follow-up study in Fiji, published in Get It Off! (ISCD Press, 2000). Found 24 case histories of breast cancer in a culture where half the women are bra-free. The women getting breast cancer were all wearing bras. Given women with the same genetics and diet and living in the same village, the ones getting breast disease were the ones wearing bras for work.
- A 2009 Chinese study (Zhang AQ, Xia JH, Wang Q, Li WP, Xu J, Chen ZY, Yang JM (2009). [Risk factors of breast cancer in women in Guangdong and the countermeasures]. In Chinese. Nan Fang Yi Ke Da Xue Xue Bao. 2009 Jul;29(7):1451-3.) found that NOT sleeping in a bra was protective against breast cancer, lowering the risk 60%.
- 2011 a study was published, in Spanish, confirming that bras are causing breast disease and cancer. It found that underwired and push-up bras are the most harmful, but any bra that leaves red marks or indentations may cause disease.
- 2015 Comparative study of breast cancer risk factors at Kenyatta National Hospital and the Nairobi Hospital J. Afr. Cancer (2015) 7:41-46. This study found a significant bra-cancer link in pre-and post-menopausal women.

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<sup>14</sup> <https://brasandbreastcancer.org/supportive-references>

- 2016 Wearing a Tight Bra for Many Hours a Day is Associated with Increased Risk of Breast Cancer Adv Oncol Res Treat 1: 105. This is the first epidemiological study to look at bra tightness and time worn, and found a significant bra-cancer link.
- 2016 Brassiere wearing and breast cancer risk: A systematic review and meta-analysis World J Meta-Anal. Aug 26, 2015; 3(4): 193-205 This systematic review and meta-analysis aimed to evaluate the association between 8 areas of brassiere-wearing practices and the risk of breast cancer. Twelve case-control studies met inclusion criteria for review. The meta-analysis shows statistically significant findings to support the association between brassiere wearing during sleep and breast cancer risk.
- 2018 Lymph stasis promotes tumor growth Journal of Dermatological Science "(t)hese findings come as no surprise to us who for a long time have been aware that alterations in regional lymphatic flow may produce dysregulation in skin immune function and consequent oncogenesis. In fact, since 2002, our team has held the view that lymphedematous areas are immunologically vulnerable sites for the development of neoplasms as well as infections and immune-mediated diseases. In recent years, increasing evidence has confirmed this assumption."