

Breast Cancer Prevention: Searching for Causes/ Implementing the Precautionary Principle

It will not be possible to truly “prevent” breast cancer – in the common meaning of the word – unless and until we understand the causes of the disease. Accordingly, Breast Cancer Action advocates redirecting a significant portion of the funds devoted to breast cancer research toward research into possible causes of the disease, with particular emphasis on those environmental contaminants for which evidence exists that they contribute to the risk for developing breast cancer and other cancers. This campaign takes several forms:

- Educational efforts through publication and distribution of a substantive, science-based bimonthly newsletter, including articles on environmental links to breast cancer
- Communication with public policy makers including the NCI and the Environmental Protection Agency about issues related to the environment and breast cancer
- Work with media representatives to highlight what is known – and not known – about breast cancer causation and prevention
- Public forums on environmental links to breast cancer

Breast Cancer Action recognizes that the practical, economic, and social barriers to research into the causes of breast cancer make the development and implementation of this research agenda complicated, time consuming and expensive. While working to eliminate these barriers, Breast Cancer Action participates in a number of efforts to promote public policies that implement the precautionary principle. These include:

- Californians for Pesticide Reform, working to eliminate those pesticides that are most harmful to human health and the environment, and to reduce reliance on all other pesticides
- Healthcare Without Harm, developing strategies for assuring that health care is provided in ways that are not harmful to our health, including elimination of: the incineration of plastic medical waste, the use of mercury, and the use of PVC products in the delivery of health care.
- Zero Dioxin Campaign, calling for changes in public policy to reduce and ultimately eliminate dioxin in our air, water, and soil.