

Is It Bad That I Haven't Worn A Bra In 3 Months?

I reported the majority of this story [while braless](#). In fact, I've been rejecting the tyranny of the bra more and more during my [coronavirus self-quarantine](#). Often, I just forget to clasp it on in the morning as I wake and begin working in my PJs — and boy, is it freeing. But can I just say: This is no small feat. I'm a D-cup. I wear [two sports bras to run](#). I need the support. Without my usual boulder holders, I find myself propping up my boobs on the dining room table that doubles as my desk for support.

In fact, I was doing just that while on the phone with [Melissa Doft, MD](#), a cosmetic plastic surgeon, when she inadvertently explained why I'd taken to "shelf-ing" my chest. "Going braless can cause stress in the shoulders, especially [if you have larger breasts](#)," she says. "Because of the architecture of the body, they tend to hang and pull down. This can cause your shoulders to roll forward, putting a strain on the neck, shoulders, and upper back. That's a major reason why people seek out breast reduction surgeries."

Interestingly, many larger-breasted people may not even consciously notice the additional strain, or clock it as related to their extra time going bralessness during coronavirus. After all, [bras come with their own discomforts](#) — poke-y underwires, painful compression, straps that chafe. Being bare-chested, at first, feels like a huge weight off. I didn't want to give it up, so when my neck started to ache, I stuck my head in the sand (and put my boobs on the table).

Pain can also creep up on you. Since you're not moving around so much when you're stuck at home, the strain of going braless isn't as intense as it would be if you were commuting or even [exercising without a bra](#), Dr. Doft adds.

And, of course, smaller breasted people aren't as affected by the pressure. "If you're an A, B, or maybe a C cup, two months of not wearing a bra wouldn't really make a difference," she says.

But I was curious: Besides pain, are there any other health benefits to wearing or not wearing a bra?

There's a long-standing myth that *wearing* a brassiere increases the risk of being diagnosed with breast cancer. But research shows that this is false. The rumor may have been sparked by a [case-control study](#) from the early '90s that found that women who didn't wear bras had a lower breast cancer risk than women who did — however, the authors noted that the link likely had more to do with factors that would prompt a woman not to wear a bra (like having smaller breasts) than the bra itself.

Then, in 2014, [another case-control study](#) confirmed that wearing a bra doesn't cause or increase risk for breast cancer.

“There's also no reason from a cancer standpoint to have any worries about *not* wearing a bra,” adds [Bryan P. Schneider](#), MD, the Vera Bradley Professor of Oncology at Indiana University's Bren Simon Cancer Center, during a call with Refinery29.

The other big bra-related topic is sagging. [Halle Berry once told *InStyle*](#): “If you don't want your boobs to hit your knees by the time you're 30, always wear a bra, even to bed.” Dr. Doft seems to subscribe to the idea that wearing a bra may help with aesthetics too: “As far as preserving skin and shape and preventing extra sagginess, that's less likely to happen with bigger breasts if you're wearing a bra,” she says. But she also notes that a [2013 French study](#) actually found that wearing bras may *increase* the likelihood of drooping breasts.

Ultimately, the truth is that your breasts are likely going to get at least [somewhat droopier](#) as you age, whether you wear a bra or not. That has to do with the natural stretching of Cooper's ligaments, connective tissues in your chest, Dr. Doft says.

So, really, these two or three months in sweet, braless isolation may not make a helluva lot of a difference in our breasts. And anyway, “at the end of the day, wearing a bra is your own decision,” Dr. Doft asserts. (That's unless, of course, your doctor has told you to wear one for some reason, like after a breast-related operation.)

During a time of illness, [large-scale job loss](#), and grief, the small joys in life, like not having to think about putting on a bra, can make a big difference in our moods. So unless it's causing you major back pain, why not lean into the little things — and sometimes tables, if you're anything like me.