

Exercise can play part in fight against cancer

By Margaret Iutzi
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Cancer is an abnormal and uncontrollable growth of cells of tissue, if left untreated, can be fatal. Most cancers take the form of tumors, but not all tumors are necessarily cancers. A tumor is identified as a mass of new tissue that serves no physiological purpose.

Several common forms of cancer can be connected with an inactive lifestyle. Clinical research supports a relationship between increased physical activity and a reduction in risk of cancer. Exercise helps in preventing obesity, a risk factor for

many kinds of cancer. Exercise also appears to have a direct effect on cancer risk.

Scientific evidence supports the theory that exercise reduces the risk of colon cancer, possibly by speeding up the movement of food through the digestive tract, encouraging immune function and reducing blood fats.

Exercise is also associated with reduced breast and reproductive organs cancer risk, in women. In fact, the effects of exercise in persons with cancer have been studied best in women with breast cancer. Exercise training in women who have had breast removal results in improved shoulder range of motion, enhanced self-image and sense

of control and increased muscle mass in women receiving post-operative chemotherapy.

Dr. G. Shelby of the University of Oklahoma Health Science Centre stated that:

"People going through chemotherapy or radiation therapy may benefit from routine physical therapy, walking and strength and flexibility exercises. Cancer therapies are fatiguing and these people get worn out....routine daily exercises may help maintain function and speed post-therapy recovery."

For cancer survivors (remission or post-cure) the purpose of exercise training should be to return them to their former

level of physical and psychological function. Dr. Shelby suggests that for people in cancer treatment stages, exercise should focus on maintaining endurance, strength and level of functioning.

Many cancer survivors can reap the rewards from exercise training, because many of the benefits occur in the skeletal muscle and also, mental well-being. Given that most cancer patients are affected by limited strength and endurance, it makes sense that an exercise routine should be designed to improve these standards.

Margaret Iutzi is an in-home personal fitness trainer and instructs part-time at *Staying Alive Fitness Inc.*

What men can do about cancer - some facts...

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Skin cancer

Skin cancer has become one of the most common types of cancer in Canada. The different types of skin cancer (basal cell, squamous cell or melanoma) begin in the different cells of the skin. The skin's top layer is made of flat, scaly squamous cells. Deeper layers are made up of round basal cells and melanocytes, which give the skin its colour. Basal cell and squamous cell skin cancers are two of the most preventable and treatable types of cancer.

What can you do

*Learn what to look for and check your skin regularly, as most skin cancers can be treated if they're caught early enough. Make

sure you or someone else checks hard-to-see places such as your back and the back of your neck, ears and legs.

*Check with your doctor if you notice any changes or are not sure about what you should be looking for.

What to watch for

*any change in the shape, colour, size or surface of a birthmark or a mole

*any new growth on your skin: for example pale, pearly nodules that grow larger and crust or red, scaly, sharply defined patches

*any sore that does not heal

*any patch of skin that bleeds, oozes, swells, itches or becomes red and bumpy

Testicular cancer

Although testicular cancer

is quite rare, it is the most common cancer in men between the ages of 20 and 45. But it can almost always be treated successfully. The testicles are located behind the penis in a sac called the scrotum. Testicular cancer may cause one or both of the testicles to enlarge or it may cause a lump in the scrotum. There may or may not be pain with the swelling.

What can you do

*All men aged 15 or over should check their own testicles regularly. Testicular self-examination is quick and simple and should be done after a hot bath or shower, when the warmth causes the testicles to descend and the scrotum to relax.

*Become familiar with your testicles so you can

detect any changes early. See your doctor right away if you notice anything unusual or need help learning self-examination.

*Have regular medical check-ups by your doctor that include testicular examination.

What to watch for

*any change in size, shape, consistency, swelling or sensation of your testicles or scrotum

*pain in the testicles or scrotum

*a dull ache or heaviness in your lower abdomen

*unusual and persistent backache

*unexplained weight loss

Reducing your risk

Research continues to show that some cancers can

be prevented. Take these steps now to reduce your risk of developing cancer.

1. Be a non-smoker and avoid second-hand smoke.

2. Eat 5 to 10 servings of vegetables and fruit a day. Choose high fibre, lower fat foods. If you drink alcohol, limit your intake to 1 to 2 drinks a day.

3. Be physically active on a regular basis; this will also help you maintain a healthy body weight.

4. Protect yourself and your family from the sun. Reduce sun exposure between 11 a.m. and 4 p.m. Check your skin regularly and report any changes to your doctor.

5. Follow cancer screening guidelines - discuss testicular exams, prostate screening and colorectal

screening with a health professional.

6. Visit your doctor or dentist if you notice a change in your normal state of health.

7. Follow health and safety instructions both at home and at work when using, storing and disposing of hazardous materials.

And remember:

*Get to know your body.

*Don't shrug off the warning signs.

*Follow a healthy lifestyle.

When you want to know more about cancer or services available in your community, call one of our information specialists toll-free at 1-888-939-3333, e-mail us at info@cis.cancer.ca or visit our website www.cancer.ca.



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