



Exercise - the Key to Cancer Prevention

by the American Institute for Cancer Research

Would you rather eat a bowl of Brussels sprouts than step on a treadmill? Do you choose to skip dessert, but avoid scaling the stairs at work? You may have made changes to your diet to fight cancer and other serious health problems, but these changes alone are not enough. Scientists say that exercise plays an important role in the cancer prevention equation.

To help decrease the risk of cancer and other chronic diseases, experts at the American Institute for Cancer Research (AICR) recommend an hour of daily exercise (such as a brisk walk or similar activity), and at least one hour of more vigorous exercise a week.

How does physical activity help protect your body against cancer? Here are a few explanations.

- * Exercise to prevent weight gain. Physical activity is crucial in maintaining a healthy weight. Being significantly overweight is a risk factor for many types of cancer, including cancers of the endometrium, kidney, breast, colon and gall bladder.
- * Get physical and burn calories. Active people tend to have higher calorie needs, and therefore eat more food. This increases the opportunities to include a variety of vegetables, fruits, whole grains and beans in their diets. These plant foods supply the body with the vitamins, minerals, fiber and other substances known to be protective against cancer.
- * Stay active to regulate hormones. If you have started a regular exercise regimen, don't be discouraged if you're not losing weight. Your body is still benefiting in other important ways. Regular exercise can improve the body's ability to use the hormone insulin, which regulates your body's blood sugar levels. Estrogen is

another hormone influenced by physical activity; lower levels of estrogen production in women are linked to lower incidence of breast cancer.

Remember, some activity is better than none and more is better than some. The benefits of being active can enrich every area of your life. In addition to protecting against many types of cancer, it can help you slim down, gain strength, relieve stress and depression, and increase your energy.

For information on how to enjoy a more physically active life, call 1-800-843-8114 ext. 10 for a free copy of AICR's brochure *Getting Active, Staying Active*.

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