HEALTH BENEFITS OF EXERCISE REPORT

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IS ASSOCIATED WITH LOWER RATES OF PREMATURE DEATH AMONG BREAST AND COLON CANCER SURVIVORS

Studies have demonstrated that exercise can improve physical function during and following cancer treatment, but little was known about the ability of exercise to impart long term survival benefits. A study in the journal Annals of Oncology reviewed a total of 23 studies including over 49,000 cancer survivors to identify the relationship between pre and post diagnosis physical activity habits and premature death among cancer survivors.

The results showed that habitual physical activity both pre and post diagnosis was associated with lower rates of premature death in both breast cancer and colon cancer survivors. In addition, cancer survivors who increased their physical activity by any level were less likely to die prematurely compared to those who did not change their activity or who were insufficiently active post diagnosis.

Health clubs provide a safe, supportive place for cancer survivors to resume or start an exercise habit, and programs specifically designed for cancer survivors are now offered at some clubs.

PHYSICALLY ACTIVE RHEUMATOID ARTHRITIS PATIENTS EXPERIENCE MILDER DISEASE

Research has shown that exercise reduces markers of inflammation, and a study in the journal Annals of Rheumatology Disease assessed the effect of physical activity five years prior to diagnosis on the clinical presentation of rheumatoid arthritis (RA). The researchers looked at several measures, including a joint disease activity score, physician assessment, self reported pain and activity limitation, comparing them to median levels in a group of adults from the Swedish Rheumatology Quality Register.

Results showed a dose-response relationship for all four measures, finding that a higher level of exercise resulted in greater likelihood that the measures were below the median level. This means that as exercise levels increased, the severity of participants' disease (based on several markers) decreased compared to non-exercisers with RA. These findings associating physical activity with milder RA support previous evidence of the beneficial effects of exercise on inflammatory conditions.

LOWER BMI, LEISURE TIME PHYSICAL ACTIVITY ASSOCIATED WITH LOWER RISK OF PARKINSON'S DISEASE

The risk factors for Parkinson's Disease are mostly unknown. A study in the European Journal of Epidemiology examined several lifestyle factors and their ability to predict incidence of Parkinson's Disease in a cohort of over 6,000 men and women participating in a Mobile Health Clinic Survey in Finland.

The study found that higher body mass index (BMI) was associated with a higher risk of developing Parkinson's, and heavy leisure time physical activity was associated with a lower risk of developing Parkinson's disease. While more research is

needed, these findings demonstrate that Parkinson's Disease may be predicted based on lifestyle factors such as exercise. Health clubs provide a safe, supportive place for all to begin or continue exercise.

SOURCES

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