



Coping with Cancer

Ways to manage the effects of a cancer diagnosis

September 2018

September is ovarian and gynecological cancer awareness month!

To learn more about support or screening recommendations visit:

<https://www.cdc.gov/cancer/dcpc/resources/features/gynecologiccancers/index.htm>

Inside this issue:

How Exercise Can Benefit You **1**

Eat Smart **1**

Strength Exercises **3**

Events this month **4**



Why Is Exercise Important After A Cancer Diagnosis?

In past years, cancer patients were often told to reduce or even stop physical activity when receiving chemotherapy or radiation treatments. However, now we know that regular physical activity is absolutely essential for better health outcomes.

Exercise is not only safe during and after cancer treatment, it's necessary for better physical health and physical function. It improves heart and blood vessel fitness, muscle strength and body com-

position (how much of your body is made up of fat, bone, or muscle), so that you can maintain your ability to perform daily tasks.

In addition to the physical benefits, there are also mental and emotional benefits to being more physically active. Exercise can help you relax so that you feel less stressed and reduce your chances of developing anxiety, fatigue, and depression.

Exercise doesn't have to be strenuous or rigorous to be beneficial. The

National Cancer Care Network's Clinical Practice Guidelines (NCCN Guidelines®) advise patients to start slowly and to increase exercise in increments. For instance, depending on your fitness and comfort level, you can start with a 10-minute walk around the block and increase this every week by a few minutes.

Continued on Page 2



Eat Smart!

- Choose fresh, whole fruits and vegetables instead of canned or processed. Frozen fruits and vegetables are great substitutes for fresh.
- Eat at least 2½ cups of "whole" vegetables and fruits each day; eat whole fruits and veggies, instead of drinking juices, since you need fiber.
- Limit sugar-sweetened beverages such as soft drinks, sports drinks, and fruit-flavored drinks.
- Limit processed meats and red meats. Choose fish, poultry, or beans instead.
- Prepare meat, poultry, and fish by baking, broiling, or poaching rather than by frying or charbroiling.
- Choose whole grains instead of refined grain products (whole wheat bread instead of white bread).
- Limit alcohol intake to 2 drinks per day for men and 1 drink per day for women. A drink of alcohol is defined as 12 ounces of beer, 5 ounces of wine, or 1½ ounces of 80-proof distilled spirits (hard liquor).

Tips for starting a new exercise program!

- Dress comfortably and drink plenty of water. Staying hydrated is very important!
- If you don't have the energy to exercise a full half hour, break it up; try three 10-minute walks during the day.
- Make exercise enjoyable; recruit a walking partner or listen to music with headphones while on a recumbent bike or treadmill.
- Warm up by swinging your arms or marching in place and cool down with gentle stretches.
- Do some gardening or house cleaning – both provide physical workouts.
- Consider yoga and tai chi; though not aerobic, they integrate movement and meditation and enhance wellness. Stretching slowly with yoga and tai chi will help with body aches and joint pain.
- Look for programs designed for cancer patients. Some health clubs and hospitals offer exercise classes—at a reduced rate—that address the challenges and needs of people with cancer.
- If on radiation therapy, avoid swimming pools; they can expose you to bacteria that may cause infections and the chlorine may irritate radiated skin.
- Listen to your body; don't exercise if you're not feeling well or running a fever.
- Check with your doctor before starting any strenuous or new physical activities.

Why is exercise important after a cancer diagnosis?, continued

Or, you may find you can exercise for 20 minutes (or longer) right away. The most important thing is to set reasonable goals that fit your fitness level and build it up slowly.

Cancer experts in this area recommend that you try to do at least 30 minutes of aerobic exercise five days during a week. That's 150 minutes per week. This can be done in shorter increments such as 10 minutes three times per day for 5 days a week.

It's also recommended that you try to reach a "moderate" speed for exercises such as walking. A "moderate" speed is defined as being breathless while exercising, but still able to carry on a conversation.

As with all new exercise programs, start slowly. If you try to do too much, you may become discouraged and stop exercising altogether. It's also helpful to exercise with a family member or a friend who can encourage you and hold you to your commitment.

The most important thing to remember before starting any new exercise program is to check with your doctor.

Once he or she approves, then get moving!

Source: American Cancer Society and National Comprehensive Cancer Network (NCCN)



Getting Started

Tips to remember

- *Talk to your doctor before starting any type of exercise program.*
- Start slowly with short periods of exercise with frequent breaks.
- Use a mix of muscle groups for strength training, aerobics and flexibility.
- Always warm up first and stretch afterward; breathe deep and relax.
- Don't push yourself; listen to your body.



Simple & Easy Exercises For You To Try

These light strength exercises will get your heart racing and your blood pumping a little bit. For upper body strength, add dumbbells.



Step-Ups

Step up and down on a heightened surface like the first step of a staircase to strengthen legs and lower body.



Chair Squat

Sit down on a chair and slowly stand to strengthen legs and lower body.



Leg Raises

Lay down on your back and raise each of your legs up in the air and down flat to strengthen core and legs.



Lunges

Standing, place one foot in front of the other and bend the legs. Walk across a room while alternating legs.

**UAB
COMPREHENSIVE
CANCER CENTER**

Wallace Tumor Institute
1824 6th Avenue South

Phone: 205.934-5772

E-mail:

tgw318@uab.edu

We're on the Web!



*We would like
your suggestions!*

*Please let us know the
topics you would like us
to include in our news-
letter and programs
you would like for us to
offer.*

Email your suggestions
to:

tgw318@uab.edu

UAB
COMPREHENSIVE
CANCER CENTER

The University of Alabama at Birmingham

Programs to Support You!

Letting Go: Reduce stress and feel refreshed

*Have you been thinking of trying something different to help you relax?
Well, now's your chance to see if YOGA might work for you!*

Join Keely Michael, our new Integrative Medicine yoga instructor, for a series of gentle movements and breathing exercises that can help you feel better both mentally and physically.

*This activity is free.
It's open to caregivers too.
A light lunch will be served*

When: Wednesday, September 26, 11:30—12:30 pm
Where: Patient and Family Resource Center, WTI 220
UAB Comprehensive Cancer Center

To Register: tgw318@gmail.com



COMING SOON!

October

Artful Journeys: contemplation and creativity for coping with cancer

November

Writing Through Cancer: When life hurts, writing helps

December

Managing the cost of living with cancer

January

FreshStart: helping you make those healthier choices!

