

Physical activity can ward off cancer

By Ismail Sina

Cancer is a disease in which abnormal cells divide without control. Cancer invades nearby tissues and can spread through the bloodstream and lymphatic system to other parts of the body. Cancer is caused by lifestyle such as physical inactivity.

It is important that one stays fit/maintains fitness because exercises reduce risk of getting cancer and improves quality of life.

Research suggests that exercise may reduce the risk of cancers such as colon and breast cancer to as much as 30%-50%. (American College of Sports Medicine) Physical activity may also prevent prostate cancer, lung cancer and endometrial cancer.

However, should one get cancer, it does not mean they cannot keep fit. Cancer patients can do the following fitness regimes:

Adults are advised to engage in moderate activity for 30 minutes for five days or more of the week. Forty-five minutes or more of moderate to vigorous activity for five days or more per week may further enhance reductions in the risk of breast and colon cancer.

Children and adolescents should engage in at least 60 minutes per day of moderate to vigorous physical activity at least five days per week.

The exercise programme should consist of cardio and resistance training. For cancer survivors, it is best to prescribe walking or cycling, walking to enable them do exercise that will make them loose weight accumulated when they were on cancer treatment.

The beneficial effects of exercises are muscular strength, body weight and composition, flexibility and increased energy.

EXERCISE

Exercise will also help to prevent the recurrence of the cancer.

The guidelines for cancer patients or survivors are:

- Getting an expert and qualified trainer.
- Fill in revised physical activity readiness questionnaire (PAR-Q) to the exercise and medical history.
- Get a letter of approval for physical activity.

For patients or survivors, the type of cancer they had or have determines the level of exercise, which will determine the exercise type, frequency, duration, intensity and progression of the exercise.

In addition to exercises, a cancer patient/survivors should eat a healthy balanced diet.

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