

Lack of Exercise Can Boost Cancer Risk

Few Americans know that inactivity can increase the risk of colon, breast and other types of cancer, a new study finds. An analysis of survey responses from 351 people revealed that while many knew a sedentary lifestyle increased their risk of heart disease (63.5 percent) and metabolic problems such as diabetes (65.8 percent), only 3.4 percent were aware it also adds to cancer risk.



The review also found low awareness that inactivity increases the risk of respiratory diseases (3.4 percent) and gastrointestinal conditions (0.9 percent). The study was published Aug. 9 in the *Journal of Health Communication*. "Many people know that not getting enough physical activity can increase your chances of having heart problems or getting diabetes. However, few people realize that inactivity can also raise their chances of getting other diseases," lead author Erika Waters said in a journal news release.

Waters is an associate professor of surgery at Washington University in St. Louis. Researchers blamed public health campaigns that emphasize the benefits of exercise on heart health and weight control without noting that inactivity increases the risk of cancer. They called for greater public education about the link between exercise and cancer risk.



More information: The U.S. National Cancer Institute has more on physical activity and cancer. --
Robert Preidt

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