Surviving Cancer

Is it safe for patients to exercise during therapy?

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Years ago, many doctors would tell cancer patients to rest and cut back on physical activity. But today, physicians are increasingly advising individuals to exercise regularly—before, during and after treatment—if safe for them to do so.

Studies show that physical activity can reduce the risk of death in cancer survivors. In addition, staying active can help improve self-esteem, balance and overall quality of life while simultaneously lowering the risk of developing additional health conditions.

The American Cancer Society (ACS) recommends that patients engage in light to moderate exercise to help reduce fatigue, a common side effect of cancer treatment.

Of course, if you're being treated for cancer, you should consult your doctor before beginning any type of exercise program. For some, treatment can affect the lungs and heart, so it's important to know about and observe any limitations.

Additionally, exercise regimens should be tailored to an individual's personal interests and needs. The ACS advises patients to work with a specialist for the best and safest results from training.

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