



June 1st, 2015

Inactivity is Risky – Get Moving!

June is Spina Bifida & Hydrocephalus/Seniors/Stroke Month

The health perils of obesity are well-known, but new research is suggesting that inactivity may be an even greater risk. In fact, about twice the risk – and, it seems to be independent of body weight. The good news is that it doesn't take much activity to begin to reverse the trend. As little as 20 minutes of walking daily is helpful, reducing the risk of premature death by 16-30%. And that's just a starting point; more exercise was even more beneficial.

Being a Weekend Warrior May Not Be Enough

"Weekend Warriors" take note: prolonged sitting has been associated with higher mortality rates. This can be in spite of other physical activity! Low to moderate activity (1 to 2.5 hours of exercise per week) was not enough to reverse the risk associated with inactivity. Those with higher activity levels did not experience elevated risk. The take home message: get moving. Often.

Sitting Too Much Increase Risk

"Sitting too much" is a risk factor for cardiovascular disease, distinct from "lack of exercise." A 2000-person study out of Dallas found that, after adjusting for other variables, such as BMI, blood pressure, cholesterol, diabetes, smoking, and physical activity level, each hour of the day spent sitting was associated with a 10% higher risk of coronary artery disease. It's not just the time you spend exercising that counts – but also the time between exercise sessions!

Exercise Rules!

While it's becoming more and more accepted that even a little exercise is better than none at all, there are escalating benefits as exercise intensity and duration increase (to a point, anyways!). The Annals of Internal Medicine journal published an article indicating that those who indulge in longer, more intense exercise experience significantly improved oral glucose tolerance testing (a marker for diabetes) in addition to better cardiovascular risk.

In today's society, which seems to expect a pill to cure every ill, it's important to note that our lifestyle choices play a huge role in achieving and maintaining health. If you're not sure where to turn, talk to your pharmacist.