

# Cancer Survivors: Move More, Sit Less for a Longer Life, Study Says

Megan Brooks  
March 24, 2022



Cancer survivors who spend more than 8 hours of the day sitting are 5 times more likely to die over the ensuing years than their peers who spend less time sitting. Being physically active, on the other hand, lowers the risk of early death, new research shows.

What's "alarming" is that so many cancer survivors have a sedentary lifestyle, Chao Cao and Lin Yang, PhD, with Alberta Health Services in Calgary, Canada, who worked on the study, tell WebMD.

The American Cancer Society recommends that cancer survivors follow the same physical activity guidance as the general population. The [target](#) is 150 to 300 minutes of moderate activity or 75 to 150 minutes of vigorous activity each week (or a combination of these).

"Getting to or exceeding the upper limit of 300 minutes is ideal," Cao and Lin say.

Yet in their study of more than 1,500 cancer survivors, more than half (57%) were inactive, reporting no weekly leisure-time physical activity in the past week.

About 16% were "insufficiently" active, or getting less than 150 minutes per week. Meanwhile, 28% were active, achieving more than 150 minutes of weekly physical activity.

Digging deeper, the researchers found that more than one-third of cancer survivors reported sitting for 6 to 8 hours each day, and one-quarter reported sitting for more than 8 hours per day.

Over the course of up to 9 years, 293 of the cancer survivors died -- 114 from cancer, 41 from heart diseases, and 138 from other causes.

After accounting for things that might influence the results, the risk of dying from any cause or cancer was about 65% lower in cancer survivors who were physically active, relative to their inactive peers.

Sitting for long periods was especially risky, according to the study in *JAMA Oncology*.

Compared with cancer survivors who sat for less than 4 hours each day, cancer survivors who reported sitting for more than 8 hours a day had nearly twice the risk of dying from any cause and more than twice the risk of dying from cancer.

Cancer survivors who sat for more than 8 hours a day, and were inactive or not active enough, had as much as five times the risk of death from any cause or cancer.

"Be active and sit less, move more, and move frequently," advise Cao and Yang. "Avoiding prolonged sitting is essential for most cancer survivors to reduce excess mortality risks."

Sources

*JAMA Oncology*: "Association of Daily Sitting Time and Leisure-Time Physical Activity With Survival Among US Cancer Survivors."

Lin Yang, PhD, epidemiologist, Department Cancer Epidemiology and Prevention Research, Alberta Health Services, Calgary, Canada.

Chao Cao, Alberta Health Services, Calgary, Canada.

American Cancer Society: "American Cancer Society Guideline for Diet and Physical Activity."

Credits:

Lead Image: Moment/Getty Images

WebMD Health News © 2022

*Cite this: Megan Brooks. Cancer Survivors: Move More, Sit Less for a Longer Life, Study Says - Medscape - Mar 24, 2022.*