

# Bariatric *focus*

HELPING PATIENTS STAY FOCUSED ON WEIGHT LOSS EVERY DAY

*Behavior choices we make affect our cancer risk*

## Exercise Lowers Risk of Colon Cancer

A new study has added considerable weight to the claim that exercise can lower the risk for colon cancer. Researchers at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis and Harvard University combined and analyzed several decades' worth of data from past studies on how exercise affects colon cancer risk. They found that people who exercised the most were 24 percent less likely to develop the disease than those who exercised the least.

Colorectal cancer is the third most common type of cancer. Each year more than 100,000 people in the United States are diagnosed with colon cancer and about 40,000 are diagnosed with rectal cancer. The study suggests that if the American population became significantly more physically active, up to 24 percent, or more than 24,000, fewer cases of colon cancer would occur each year.

The study was recently published in the

British Journal of Cancer. In the study, the authors gathered the results from all relevant studies published in English on the effect of physical activity on colon cancer risk.

They eliminated from consideration any studies that combined both colon and rectal cancer because exercise has not been shown to affect rectal cancer risk - including such studies would have led to an underestimation of the effect of exercise on colon cancer risk. In all, they analyzed 52 studies going back as far as 1984, making their analysis the most comprehensive to date.

They found that the protective effect of exercise held for all types of physical activity, whether that activity was recreational, such as jogging, biking or swimming, or job related, such as walking, lifting or digging. It also held for both men and women.

The difference between people who were the most physically active and those who were the least varied from study to study.




As an example, in a 2007 study by Wolin and colleagues, women who walked the most realized a 23 percent reduction in their risk of colon cancer. Those highly active women walked briskly for five to six hours each week. By comparison, the women in that study who walked the least walked only a half hour each week.

This study adds to an ever-growing body of evidence that the behavior choices we make affect our cancer risk. Physical activity is at the top of the list of ways that you can reduce your risk of colon cancer.

### Advanced Digestive Surgery

At Surgical Associates, we specialize in advanced digestive surgery. This includes all procedures on the esophagus, stomach, intestines, colon, gallbladder, liver and pancreas! Our preferred approach to most procedures is minimally invasive surgery or laparoscopy, including laparoscopic colon resections.

### Support Group Meeting

 Our next gastric banding support group meeting is Thursday, March 19 at 7 pm. Mark your calendar and plan to attend!

## March is Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month

Colorectal cancer **screening saves lives**. However, many people who are at risk for the disease are not being screened according to national guidelines.

It is estimated that as many as 60% of colorectal cancer deaths could be prevented if all men and women aged 50 years or older were screened routinely. In most cases, colorectal cancer develops from precancerous polyps (abnormal growths) in the colon or rectum. Screening tests can find precancerous polyps, so that they can be removed before they turn into cancer. Screening tests also can find colorectal cancer early, when treatment works best.

The most effective way to reduce your risk of colon cancer is by having regular colorectal cancer screening tests beginning at age 50. However, you may need to be tested earlier or more often than other people if you or a close relative have had colorectal polyps or colorectal cancer.

***If you are aged 50 or older, or think you may be at increased risk for colorectal cancer, speak with us or with your primary care doctor about getting screened.***

