

## An Active, Healthier Lifestyle

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, about 53% of U.S. adults fail to meet national physical activity guidelines, and 42% of adults are obese. Obesity increases the risk of breast, endometrial, esophageal, kidney, liver, ovarian, pancreatic, colorectal, stomach, thyroid, head and neck, and gallbladder cancers, as well as multiple myeloma. It may also increase the risk of lung cancer, male breast cancer, non-Hodgkin lymphoma, and aggressive prostate cancer. Establishing habits of healthy eating and physical activity to prevent being overweight or obese can reduce the risk of many cancers.

### Statistics

- **Eighteen percent** of all newly diagnosed cancers are related to obesity, lack of physical activity, excess alcohol, and poor nutrition.
- It is estimated that more than **611,720 Americans** will die from cancer this year, second only to heart disease.
- By 2030, researchers project that obesity will affect **nearly half of U.S. adults**, resulting in more cancer cases. Being overweight can **increase the risk of cancer** by causing a higher production of certain hormones and pro-inflammatory substances including estrogen, insulin, and insulin-like growth factor, which may stimulate cancer growth.
- **Twenty-seven percent** of adult Americans report no leisure-time physical activity, and more than **70%** of adults are considered overweight or obese. Evidence shows that losing just 5 to 10% of one's body weight can result in improved health.
- For those already fighting cancer, regular physical activity has been shown to **improve quality of life**. Numerous health benefits of exercise include a lower risk of heart disease; healthier bones, muscles, and joints; improved appetite; strengthened immune system; reduced nausea and fatigue; lower risk of anxiety and depression; improved social contacts; more control over weight; and decreased risk of recurrence for certain types of cancer.

### Tips for Cancer Prevention

A “moderate” level of physical activity is exercise that elevates the heart rate but still allows for some degree of conversation, such as fast walking or jogging. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ physical activity guidelines recommend healthy adults participate in a minimum of 150 minutes of moderate exercise or 75 minutes of vigorous exercise each week to maintain health and reduce the risk of multiple diseases including cancer. Exercise comes in many forms, can fit into a busy schedule, doesn’t have to cost much or anything at all, and can facilitate fun connections with others with shared interests. Talk to your doctor about your current health condition, the amount of physical activity best for your body, and reasonable exercise goals.

### Examples of moderate exercise include:

- Biking
- Gardening
- Mowing the lawn
- Yoga
- Dancing
- Horseback riding
- Fast walking
- Pilates

### For vigorous exercise, individuals may do the following:

- Aerobics
- HIIT
- Running
- Swimming
- Weight Training
- Basketball
- Jumping rope
- Martial arts
- Rowing

Those starting from a relatively inactive lifestyle should increase activity levels gradually instead of abruptly escalating their physical fitness routine to reduce risk of injuries. This could mean gradually increasing the level of exertion, number of reps, or duration of workout. People with physical limitations can meet with their physician or physical therapist to identify exercises and activities that will optimize their abilities. Lower-impact activities such as yoga, Pilates, and bodyweight-based exercise can be ideal for those with worn joints. For weight loss, gradual increase in exercise along with attention to caloric intake is required, particularly reducing unnecessary sugar calories. Even small changes that increase the average level of daily physical activity can lead to impressive cumulative health benefits.

## Employ simple, creative strategies to increase activity levels:

- Walk or ride a bike instead of taking a car.
- Take the stairs instead of the elevator or escalator.
- Walk and talk with people instead of sending emails or holding meetings.
- Fit in a workout over lunchtime.
- Plan physical activities on family vacations.
- Get involved in a recreational team or physically active group.
- Adopt a dog who will 'remind' you to go for walks.
- Walk when making phone calls.
- In the office, use an adjustable desk with the option to stand for part of the day.
- Set a timer to get up and do a lap, to avoid sitting for prolonged periods during the workday.
- Use a step counter and/or phone app to participate in 'adventure' challenges with friends or coworkers.
- Meet a friend for a walk instead of brunch.
- Set a family goal to visit local, state, and national parks regularly.
- If work is sedentary, choose a physically active volunteer activity or hobby.
- Try out new activities by taking an exercise class online or in person.

## About Texas Oncology

With more than 530 physicians and 280 locations, Texas Oncology is an independent private practice, a member of The US Oncology Network, that sees more than 71,000 new cancer patients each year. Founded in 1986, Texas Oncology provides comprehensive, multidisciplinary care, and includes Texas Center for Proton Therapy, Texas Breast Specialists, Texas Colon & Rectal Specialists, Texas Oncology Surgical Specialists, Texas Urology Specialists and Texas Infusion and Imaging Center. Texas Oncology's robust community-based clinical trials and research program has contributed to the development of more than 100 FDA-approved cancer therapies. Learn more at [TexasOncology.com](https://www.texasoncology.com).

*Sources: American Cancer Society, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Cancer Institute, National Institutes of Health, Obesity Action Coalition, and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services*



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