

Huh? Exercise Does & Doesn't Affect Cancer Risks

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Prostate cancer risks may be reduced with exercise in white but not black men

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Sometimes genetics just aren't fair. Exercise helps everybody. When it comes to reducing prostate cancer risks, though, there's good news for some men, but not so much for others.

A new study suggests that regular exercise may lower prostate cancer risks in white men but not in black men.

For white men who are diagnosed with prostate cancer, regular exercise may keep more serious forms of the disease at bay. Black men don't enjoy the same benefits.

"Do some form of exercise every day."

Previous research has shown that exercise lowers the risk of prostate cancer. It is also known that black men are more likely than white men to develop and die of prostate cancer.

Lionel L. Bañez, MD, of the Durham Veterans Affairs Medical Center, led the study looking to look at how exercise impacts men of different races.

The team asked 307 (164 white and 143 black) men who were having a prostate biopsy to answer questions about how much they exercised. The survey categorized exercise into four groups - sedentary, mildly active, moderately active and highly active. Exercise at any level did not affect a black man's risk of developing prostate cancer.

Researchers also looked at the relationship between exercise and the grade of prostate cancer that was diagnosed following the biopsies.

Men who exercised had a 13 percent decreased risk of having high grade disease that was likely to grow quickly and spread. This was significant for white men, but not black.

"Another article which underlines what I have been telling men for years, 'what is heart healthy is prostate healthy,'" E. David Crawford, MD, professor of surgery, urology and radiation oncology, and head of the Section of Urologic Oncology at the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center in Denver, told dailyRx News.

"But why do African American men appear to have no benefit? There have been many postulated reasons why AA men have both a

higher incidence and mortality from prostate cancer. Things such as androgen levels, androgen receptor differences, access to health care, choice of treatments and vitamin D levels are just a few. I suspect that they do benefit from exercise and that a larger study and longer follow-up might reveal a difference," Dr. Crawford concluded.

Dr. Bañez agrees. "Further studies are needed to investigate the mechanism behind this racial disparity in deriving cancer-related benefits from exercise which disfavors African-American men," he said.

This study was published February 11 in *CANCER*, a peer-reviewed journal of the American Cancer Society.

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