

Exercise improves survival rates for colorectal cancer patients

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Men who have been treated for colorectal cancer can reduce their risk of dying from the disease by engaging in regular exercise, according to a new study by researchers at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute. The findings are published in the December 14 issue of the *Archives of Internal Medicine*.

"Previous research has shown [regular physical activity](#) reduces the risk of developing colon cancer," says the study's lead author, Jeffrey A. Meyerhardt, MD, MPH, of Dana-Farber. "This current study confirms two other studies from our group that shows physical activity by colorectal cancer survivors helps them live longer than those survivors who are not physically active."

Meyerhardt and his team studied 668 men with colorectal cancer. More than 50 percent of the men exercised the equivalent of one hour of walking, at least six days per week, although the men engaged in a variety of different recreational exercises. Researchers found patients who engaged in moderate physical activity were 53 percent more likely to be alive and free of the disease than those who were less physically active. The benefit of [exercise](#) was seen regardless of age, how advanced the cancer, weight and any history of previous [physical activity](#).

"Moderate exercise has now been incorporated in some guidelines for colorectal cancer survivors and this new research should further reinforce to oncologists that they should discuss this in their survivorship plan," says Meyerhardt. "However, while our work found a significant

benefit for patients who exercise, it's important that exercise still be seen as a supplement to, not a replacement for, standard therapies."

More than 148,000 people in the United States are diagnosed with colorectal cancer each year and, despite advances in screening and treatment, the disease causes almost 50,000 deaths annually.

Source: Dana-Farber [Cancer](#) Institute

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