

Regular Exercise Impacts All Areas of Well-being! *By Kim Brandstetter, DO*

We are all aware of the positive effect exercise can have when it comes to weight control and cardiovascular health, but are you aware of all the ways exercise can positively impact your health? When you partake in moderate daily activity – walking, stretching or light strength training during which you can talk without needing to catch your breath – the benefits are extensive and can touch every aspect of your life. It may even alleviate or help control many chronic medical problems.

In order to understand the positive effects of exercise, let's first breakdown the negative impacts of inactivity. Observational studies have shown that individuals who lead a sedentary lifestyle, or have occupations requiring prolonged sitting, have higher mortality rates, higher incidences of diabetes, cardiovascular disease and cancer. During times of complete inactivity such as hospitalization, older adults can lose up to 1.3 lbs per week of lean leg mass/muscle mass resulting in increased risk of falls/injury, lower resting metabolic rate, lower energy levels and lung capacity and raise your risk for developing blood clots.

Participating in a regular exercise program can positively impact every aspect of your well-being.

Exercise is a natural antidepressant. Regular aerobic exercise has been shown to increase both the production and release of serotonin in your brain which leads to an overall feeling of happiness/well-being.

Sleep quality will be improved and the risk of dementia or cognitive issues are reduced.

Exercise can result in weight loss, which can relieve pressure on the joints reducing arthritis pain.

Even if it does not result in weight loss, regular exercise can help reduce blood pressure and increase your HDL or your "good" cholesterol resulting in better cardiovascular health.

Exercising muscles do not need insulin to take up blood sugar. This natural way of bringing down your blood sugar without medication increases your body's sensitivity to your own insulin production when at rest, increasing control of diabetes or reducing the risk of developing diabetes in the future.

Exercise stimulates production vascular endothelial growth factor or VEGF which promotes growth of new blood vessels. This translates into better circulation and some studies suggest reduction in restless leg symptoms.

Aerobic exercise results in an increase in fibrinolytic or clot busting compounds in the blood which means lower risk of developing heart attack, stroke, deep vein clot and pulmonary embolism to name a few.

Weight bearing exercise such as running, walking and weight lifting helps stimulate the bones to maintain a healthy density, reducing the incidence of osteoporosis and hip fractures with age.

Evidence supports that regular exercise reduces the risk of developing breast or colon cancer, some studies even suggest a correlation with reduction in endometrial and lung cancer as well.

Before starting any exercise, talk with your PCP and determine if the exercise program you've chosen is right for you. With moderate daily exercise you could put yourself on the road to a longer, happier and healthier life.

Nurse Practitioners Join the Team

Sara Barrett MSN FNP-C and Sue Ann Kilgore MSN FNP-C have joined Thunderbird IM and will care for patients at both the Glendale and Phoenix offices.

Sara has worked in a variety of settings from hospital intensive care units to medical practices. A proponent of preventive health, she earned her Master of Science in Nursing, Family Nurse Practitioner from the University of Phoenix.

Sue Ann brings with her hospital leadership experience within oncology, hematology and bone marrow transplant units. Dedicated to caring for the whole person, she earned her Master of Science in Nursing, Family Nurse Practitioner from Grand Canyon University.



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