



# Survive Well Live Longer

PAID PROMOTIONAL FEATURE

According to the National Coalition for Cancer Survivorship, the U.S. has more than 16 million cancer survivors and those numbers are expected to climb. “Twenty years ago, we didn’t really talk that much about survivorship and quality of life after treatment,” says Robert Boissonneault Oncology Institute’s Dr. Joseph Bennett. “We basically focused on cure rate, cure rate, cure rate.”

Speaking at RBOI’s “We Can Week,” a virtual event for cancer survivors and their supporters, Dr. Bennett explains how the approach to cancer has changed over time. “With more and more cancer survivors, we have got to focus on minimizing the side effects, long term-wise, of treatment, but also focusing on what can be done to help people survive and lead a happy life.”

Dr. Bennett outlines two different types of risk factors. The factors we cannot change include family history, age, and gender. Those we can change include our behavior, such as tobacco and alcohol use, eating habits, and exercise.

“You can change your pair of jeans but you can’t change your genes,” Bennett explains.

The Population Reference Bureau reports that nearly half of all early deaths in the U.S. could be prevented just by changing our habits. Two factors alone, (1) tobacco use and (2) poor diet and lack of exercise, accounted for a third of all preventable early deaths in 2010.

Says Bennett, “If we literally eliminated tobacco products and if we ate better and were more active, we could probably eliminate a million deaths per year.”

## Consistency is Key

“You can’t say I’m going to exercise today and then go a month without doing anything,” Dr. Bennett says. “It needs to become part of your pattern of life.”

Doing what you enjoy will help you exercise consistently. “If you like paddling a boat or a kayak, walking, riding a bike, anything it is, you have to find something that you like to do,” he advises. “What we recommend is at least 30 minutes of moderate to vigorous activity on five or more days of the week if you can. If you can bump it up to 45 minutes to an hour, that’s preferable.” Exercising for at least three hours per week delivers a significant benefit, but “one hour a week is better than nothing.”

The rewards are well worth the effort. “By being more active, you’re losing weight and increasing your immune system,” Bennett says. “Your body’s better able to fight cancer and other disease processes.”

Bennett adds that our temperate weather gives us an advantage: Floridians exercise more than the U.S. average. “So we can all go out in a pair of shorts and ride a bike.” Or do whatever gets us moving.

More than  
**650,000**

Early U.S. deaths in 2010 resulting from poor diet alone



**2**

Smoking was the second leading cause of U.S. early deaths in 2010



**48%**

Proportion of U.S. early deaths due to preventable factors



More than  
**2 years**

Decrease in average life expectancy for Americans compared to 16 other high-income countries



## Many Happy Returns

“There are a lot of health benefits of being more physically active,” Dr. Bennett says. Exercising regularly can help you:

- ✔ Sleep better at night.
- ✔ Keep mentally sharp.
- ✔ Decrease depression.
- ✔ Increase self-esteem.
- ✔ Strengthen muscles and bones (better balance/reduced risk of falling).
- ✔ Improve your immune response.
- ✔ Lower your cholesterol.
- ✔ Lower your risk of heart disease and other chronic diseases like diabetes.
- ✔ Lower your cancer risk.

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