Any form of exercise is good medicine

Can exercise be a cure for what ails you? Or, better yet, can it keep you from getting sick in the first place? Health and fitness experts are pointing to “yes.” And while they’re still exploring how powerful exercise is, there are things they already know about its benefits to your body and mind.

Are you just starting a new fitness routine? Training for a competition? Or, are a regular exerciser somewhere in between? No matter what your activity level, keep going. That’s because your active lifestyle may have the power to:

1. Fight disease

There’s great news for all of us who are trying to avoid or manage serious illness. Exercise does good things for more than your heart and lungs; it’s also a great way to safeguard against other big health threats like:

- **Cancer.** Researchers found that being active helps keep cancer from happening at all. Their studies have also shown that moving regularly can slow tumor growth, especially in skin, liver and lung cancers. Exercise gets your blood pumping, carrying warrior cells called NKs (Natural Killers) throughout your body to search for and destroy cancer cells. Exercise also has a profound effect on breast cancer prevention, recurrence and survival rates. The activity keeps your immune system strong and also helps you avoid weight gain — a known contributor to breast cancer.

- **Diabetes.** Regular physical activity that includes both aerobic and resistance types of exercise improves how your body uses blood sugar (glucose). And the bigger news? Exercise can delay or prevent the onset of type 2 diabetes. For anyone who is at high risk, regular exercise and a bit of weight loss — as little as five percent of your body weight — can lower your chances of getting diabetes up to 58 percent.
2. Manage pain

Moving helps your muscles and joints stay healthy. Low-impact activities like walking, swimming and cycling can keep them in motion and help reduce painful arthritis symptoms. Regular exercise also builds muscle and bone strength. And that can help you maintain good posture, prevent or manage back pain and avoid conditions like osteoporosis.

3. Get into your head

A lot happens in your brain when you exercise. A power walk, a dance class or playing basketball are just some of the stepped-up activities that can get the feel-good chemicals flowing through your brain and body. It’s a healthy stress buster and mood lifter. And because blood and oxygen flow better through your brain and body when you’re regularly active, you may be less likely to develop plaques and tangles — two things that can lead to memory loss linked to Alzheimer’s disease and dementia.

Need more reasons to move?

- Every hour of regular, vigorous exercise could add two hours of life expectancy.
- People who exercise regularly can save $500 per year in health care costs.

Article sources: