Article Series Prostate

Beyond Prostate Cancer —the importance of Exercise

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[Dr. Nelson] One of the major therapies for treating advanced prostate cancer…is suppressing testosterone.

However, we clearly know that suppressing testosterone has side effects.

[Dr. Lee] For instance, it can reduce muscle mass, it can increase fat mass, it could reduce bone mineral density, et cetera.

[Dr. Nelson] We've learned over time that exercise…is very important in combating the side effects.

[Dr. Brady] Exercise has been something that's been recommended by doctors for years and years.

In prostate cancer, we're starting to look at how it can have positive biological effects, as well.

[Matt] Twenty to twenty-five years ago, doctors were telling cancer patients…

…and cancer survivors to rest to let their bodies recover. But more recently…

…research has shown the importance of exercise on increasing aerobic capacity, increasing muscular strength, and increasing quality of life.

[Kelsey] There's always an exercise modification available to you. So if your cancer has spread to your upper body…there's plenty of lower body exercises that you can still do and are readily available for people out there. You just want to find what fits best with your ability and your interests.

[Steve] I am on a program with a physical therapist to exercise, to fight the effects of hormone therapy. And you have kind of an up and down pathway. Say, well, you've been laying around, haven't been doing quite as much, you start doing a little bit more exercise, the next day later you feel a lot better. You really do, it is dramatic.

[Frank] With all the treatment that I've had, you lose your testosterone……and that makes you tired and fatigued. And I find that the only way I can overcome that, believe it or not, is through exercising.

[John] Exercise is important to me.

[Gary] For me, mentally it's probably just as important, the exercise.

[Dr. Cheng] Exercise is something that will help you continue to receive more treatment, and just feel better. And know that that's just as important as the treatments that we offer.

[Chris] Exercising actually gets you singularly focused on self. Because it is all about yourself, your physical condition, and your recovery.

[Jack] Participating in exercise…has made me feel better about having more control in my life.

[Matt] One of the barriers for many men is not knowing what to do when they exercise. And so…finding an exercise program that's already been designed for someone in their situation is really important.

[Dr. Nelson] One of our goals here is to make something…that's very easy to tap into to teach you exactly how to…safely and effectively carry out a good exercise plan.

[Dr. Cheng] The Fred Hutch has a number of excellent brochures to guide you through some of these exercises, but I would also encourage…patients to talk with their doctors about how to incorporate them into their lifestyle.

[Matt] Exercise can be for anyone no matter what their ability, what their age, what their background is, there's a program for everyone out there.

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Physical activity and structured exercise can help increase aerobic capacity, increase muscular strength and overall well-being.