

Denita Young
County Extension Agent -FCS
Rains County

National Cancer Survivor Month

Cancer has probably touched your life in some way, whether it has been through a family member or friend. I encourage you to join me as we recognize June as the National Cancer Survivors Month. More specifically, the first Sunday in June is usually recognized as National Cancer Survivors Day. As we celebrate with our loved ones who are surviving their fight with cancer, we must recognize they have new concerns that must be addressed once they are in remission. The following Press Release from Texas AgriLife Extension Service explains some of the things they can do as they recover.

Benefits of Physical Activity on the Quality of Life of Cancer Survivors

Cancer is the second leading cause of all deaths in the United States, following heart disease.

It is estimated that 1 in every 3 individuals will be diagnosed with cancer at some point in their lifetime. Despite this alarming statistic, the number of people living with cancer is on the rise. According to the American Cancer Society, there are roughly 11 million Americans living with cancer, with this number expected to increase due to improved screening tools and medical treatment.

The term “cancer survivor” is defined as the process of living with, through, and beyond cancer.

Therefore, cancer survivorship begins at diagnosis. Most public health efforts focus primarily on prevention, early detection, and control of cancer; however, recent studies have shifted their aims to cancer survivorship, addressing the issues that people living with cancer face.

Numerous articles have investigated the benefits of exercise and physical activity on the quality of life of cancer survivors. A published study, cited by the American Cancer Society, concluded that cancer patients should be counseled to increase their level of exercise to help overcome the fatigue that so often accompanies cancer treatments. Another study specifically focused on patients who participated in

two 10-week sessions of a wellness program that included aerobic exercise, strength training, flexibility, and relaxation activities. The results from this study showed a 43 percent increase in strength and a 50 percent increase in endurance among these participants.

In addition to the above studies, various published articles have also noted the positive effects that exercise and physical activity can have on the quality of life of cancer survivors. In general, these studies state that physical activity may reduce overall levels of fatigue, enhance or maintain muscular strength, and produce higher levels of physical independence. Engaging in regular physical activity may help cancer survivors return to a more active lifestyle, where everyday activities, such as walking up staircases or housekeeping, will not pose as a limitation.

If you are a person living with cancer, it is important to talk with your health care professional before participating in any type of physical activity. Cancer survivorship studies are relatively new, and although

these study results are promising, the need for further research is considered vital. For more information, please visit the American Cancer Society webpage <http://www.cancer.org>

The information herein is for educational purposes only. References to commercial products or trade names is made with the understanding that no discrimination is intended or no endorsement by the Texas AgriLife Extension Service is implied.

Extension programs serve people of all ages regardless of socioeconomic level, race, color, sex, religion, disability or national origin.

The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating.