

Stand Up for Your Health

Recently, several new studies have examined the very real dangers of a sedentary lifestyle. Two studies published in the February 2013 journal *Diabetologia*, suggest a conclusion that will surprise no one: sitting too much is bad for you.

In the studies, the researchers compared time spent sitting, as well as the amount of time engaged in moderate-to-vigorous exercise, against risk factors for diabetes. The researchers found that time spent sitting was significantly linked to higher blood sugar and cholesterol levels, and other heart and diabetes risk factors, even after compensating for the amount of time spent exercising and the amount of body fat.



Denise DeCarlo, exercise physiologist with the Fauquier Health Wellness Center, shows during an adaptive yoga demonstration that there are many of ways to use a chair. Not all of them involve sitting.

A third study (published in the *International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity*) also suggests that the more people sit each day, the greater their risk for chronic health problems -- including cancer, heart disease, and diabetes.

These findings have implications for office workers, truck drivers and other people who regularly sit for long periods of time. “Active people do better with regard to chronic disease compared with less physically active people, but we should also be looking at the benefits of just reducing sitting,” said Richard Rosenkranz, assistant professor of human nutrition at Kansas State University.

LeAnn McCusker, director of the Wellness Center was not surprised by these findings. She said, “Our bodies are meant to move. The effects of physical activity (even if it’s standing vs. sitting) are cumulative. Generally speaking, for each notch we take it up (i.e, laying down to sitting up, sitting up to standing, standing to walking, walking to more vigorous forms of exercise), we can expect to be healthier. Don’t underestimate the power of moving on your health.”

And it’s not just our jobs that keep us sitting. Even if vigorous exercise is a part of your routine, leisure hours are often spent on the couch, watching television or surfing the Web. Denise DeCarlo, exercise physiologist at the Wellness Center, said, “Because technological advances have taken movement out of our day, we have to be creative in sneaking movement back in. Try this: When you sit down, stand back up and sit down again. When you go to get up, stand up, sit down again, then stand back up. There, you have just done two squats. Or set a timer for 30

minutes at your desk, and when it goes off, get up walk down the hallway. Take phone calls standing up. Can you have ‘walking meetings’ instead sitting around a table?”

She added, “Even if you exercise on a regular basis, but sit eight hours a day, your health may still be at risk. Try standing for two hours a day instead of sitting. For a 170-pound person, standing two hours more per day can mean burning an extra 22,000 calories a year – that is equivalent to losing 6 ¼ pounds.”

Wellness Center Provides Exercise Options for All

Because everyone needs to move more, even those with mobility issues, exercise experts have adapted their techniques for those who can’t move around easily. The Fauquier Health Wellness Center has equipment and classes to help. Recumbent steppers, recumbent bicycles and arm ergometers (arm bikes) are available to help those who may have orthopedic limitations in their hips, knees or ankles.

McCusker adds, “We also offer classes like gentle yoga and Zumba Gold that can be done from a seated position. We hope that by participating in our programs, people get strong enough to do more. Whether it’s from a seated position or a standing position, moving is better for you than being still.”