

# Exercise linked to improved bladder cancer survival

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But smoking and a delayed diagnosis might boost the risk of dying from the disease, researchers warn.

(HealthDay)—Regular exercise may increase the odds of bladder cancer survival. But smoking and a delay in diagnosis are two factors that might increase the risk of dying from the disease, the findings from two new studies suggest.

The first study found that regular [physical activity](#) can reduce the risk of dying from bladder cancer. Meanwhile, the second study found that women are more likely to ignore blood in their urine—a key warning sign for this type of cancer. By not visiting their doctor, women are more likely to be diagnosed after the disease has progressed, making it more difficult to treat, the researchers said.

"Bladder cancer is among the top 10 most common cancers in the United States, with an estimated 72,000 new cases occurring each year," Dr. Mirza Moben, an assistant professor of urology at the University of Kansas Medical Center, said in a news release from the American Urological Association.

"Understanding the myriad factors impacting effective diagnosis and treatment will ultimately lead to better outcomes—underscoring the importance of this type of research," added Moben.

Both studies were presented at the American Urological Association annual meeting, which concluded Wednesday in Orlando, Fla.

The first study, from researchers at the University of California, San Diego, involved national survey data on more than 200,000 people. Of these, 48 percent were men, and 73 percent were white. The participants provided information on their level of physical activity and their body mass index—a measurement that can help determine if someone is a normal weight for their height.

Although the investigators found no link between ethnicity or gender and survival rates for bladder cancer, they did find that exercise may prevent bladder cancer deaths. The participants who exercised were more likely to survive their disease than those who didn't exercise. Even light or moderate exercise might help, the study authors suggested.

A past history of smoking was also linked to a tripled likelihood of dying from bladder cancer compared to those who never smoked, the researchers added.

However, while the study found an association between exercise, smoking and [survival rates](#), it did not prove a cause-and-effect relationship.

A separate study, conducted by researchers from Vanderbilt University in Nashville, involved more than 9,000 Medicare patients who were diagnosed with blood in their urine, or hematuria, during an office visit with their doctor between January 2009 and June 2010.

Although blood in the urine is the most prevalent indicator of bladder cancer, the researchers found that an evaluation for this problem was complete in just 14 percent of the patients analyzed. In addition, 21 percent had an incomplete evaluation and 65 percent had no evaluation for this symptom, according to the study.

The researchers found that racial differences in bladder cancer outcomes are not due to the quality of evaluations for blood in the urine. They did find, however, that women were less likely than men to visit their doctor for an evaluation after developing blood in their urine. This delay in seeking medical attention may prevent the detection of the disease at an early stage, leading to worse outcomes, the study authors cautioned.

Smokers in this study were also more than four times more likely to die of [bladder cancer](#) than non-smokers, the findings showed.

Research presented at medical meetings should be considered preliminary until published in a peer-reviewed journal.

**More information:** The U.S. National Cancer Institute has more about [bladder cancer](#).

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