

Experts: Exercise may reduce odds of getting breast cancer

By Laura Martin, Gannett

Exercise doesn't just lower the number on the scale: Studies now show that it can also reduce breast cancer risk.

The American Cancer Society predicts that in 2011, 288,000 American women will be diagnosed with breast cancer and that 39,520 women will die of the disease. These numbers could decrease significantly if more women were active, said Dr. Alvaro Carrascal, the American Cancer Society senior vice president of cancer control for New York and New Jersey.

"The relationship between physical activity and breast cancer has been studied widely, and several studies have shown that active women have a lower risk of getting breast cancer than sedentary women," Alvaro said.

The National Cancer Institute has funded studies exploring the role of physical activity and cancer risk, and they have found that, across 50 studies, the risk of developing breast cancer was 20 percent lower among the most active women than among the least active.

These studies found that exercise lowered breast cancer risk for both pre- and post-menopausal women, but risk reduction was slightly greater for women who had already gone through menopause.

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