

## Notes



LIVING WITH CANCER

# Being active when you have cancer

This leaflet was reviewed in September 2007 by the Cancer Society. The Cancer Society's leaflets are reviewed every three years.

For more information phone the Cancer Information Service **0800 CANCER (226 237)** or visit these websites: [www.cancernz.org.nz](http://www.cancernz.org.nz)  
[www.sparc.org.nz](http://www.sparc.org.nz)



A guide for people with cancer



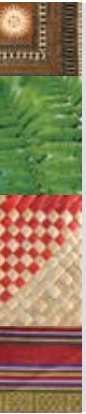
Push Play is a nationwide SPARC campaign to get more people more active more often. The campaign aims to increase awareness about the benefits of regular, moderate physical activity – and how easy it is to get active.

Small amounts of activity can give health benefits. At least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity on most days of the week is recommended.

If you would like information and ideas on how to get active in your area call your regional sports trust on **0800 ACTIVE (228 483)** or visit [www.sparc.org.nz](http://www.sparc.org.nz)

**PUSH PLAY**





In the past, people with cancer were advised to rest and limit their daily activity to help avoid fatigue (extreme tiredness). Research shows regular physical activity can increase energy.



## Benefits

In addition to reducing fatigue, regular physical activity can:

- improve your immune system
- relieve pain and help you cope with the side effects of treatment
- relieve stress and reduce anxiety and depression
- stimulate your appetite and improve your digestion
- help you relax and sleep more soundly
- improve your mood and heighten your sense of well being
- improve physical fitness and help you achieve a healthy weight.

There are many ways you can become more active. A formal programme where you set aside time for exercise is one way. Simply including more activity in your daily routine is another.

Your doctor may suggest an exercise or fitness specialist, and/or give you a Green Prescription to support and plan your activity. Your options will depend on your physical condition, the stage and type of cancer you have, the treatment you are receiving, and any side effects you might be experiencing.

### Choose activities that:

- increase your endurance.  
Walk, swim or cycle. Take the stairs. Walk to the shops instead of driving. Mow the lawn. Play with the kids. Join a walking or tramping group.
- improve your strength.  
Lift weights. Go to an exercise class. Enjoy outdoor work – sweep the driveway, pull weeds, or push a wheelbarrow.
- extend your range of movement.  
Take a stretch break at work. Find a yoga, Tai Chi or Pilates class in your area (stretching and breathing activities). Do housework – dust, vacuum, and reach to wash the windows.

Here are a few more suggestions

- Start slowly and build up time and intensity gradually.
- Ease back if you're feeling particularly tired.
- Take a break on days you don't feel up to it.
- Eat well and drink lots of fluids.
- Ask your family/whānau and friends to support your efforts.
- Set goals that suit you.

If any of the following problems occur during or soon after activity, see your doctor:

- breathlessness, chest discomfort, palpitations or an irregular heart beat
- blurred vision or fainting
- extreme fatigue
- bone or joint pain
- dizziness or nausea (feeling sick).

**Be active, do what you can and what you enjoy.**