

# **SENIOR FITNESS**

## **Exercise and Prostate Cancer**

**By**

**Jim Evans**

**DEAR JIM:** At 65, I have recently been diagnosed with early prostate cancer. My doctor has recommended a “wait and see” attitude until considering any conventional treatment. At the same time, he has suggested that I reduce the fat in my diet and begin an exercise program to slow – or possibly even reverse - its progression. I know I’m a little overweight, and I’m not real big on exercise, but this course of action seems a little too “way out” to me. I’m tempted to just have the necessary surgery and move on with my life rather than wait for the other shoe to drop, so to speak. **DOUBTING TOM IN TEMECULA**

**DEAR TOM:** I’m sure I don’t have to tell you that prostate cancer is the most common cancer for men – the second deadliest following lung cancer – according to the American Cancer Society and is more prevalent in men over 65. However, since it is a very slowly progressing form of cancer, it is not unusual to delay conventional surgery or radiation (or hormone) treatment. This period of waiting is typically called “watchful waiting.”

It is also not unusual to seek alternative ways to control prostate cancer, and your doctor seems to be up to date on the latest research. According to a study released by the University of California, San Francisco (Journal of Urology, September 2005), and reiterated by Dr. Dean Ornish, clinical professor at the University, “Changes in diet and lifestyle that we found in earlier research could reverse the progression of coronary heart disease may also affect the progression of prostate cancer.”

What changes, in particular? Diet changes were, perhaps, the most inflexible with an almost total emphasis on vegetables, fruits, whole grains, legumes, and soy products supplemented by fish oil, selenium, and vitamins C and E. And, of course, good old-fashioned exercise in the minimal form of at least walking for 30 minutes a day, six days a week was part of the equation. The study also mandated 60 minutes of stress management daily – yoga, for example.

Some participants in the study group dropped out because, they said, the diet and lifestyle changes were too difficult to follow. Too bad, because after the first year, the PSA average PSA levels for participants who followed the recommended

regimen decreased by 4%, and NONE required any treatment due to prostate cancer progression. In contrast, the control group, which did not follow the regimen, showed an average increase of 6% in PSA level and several of its participants required conventional prostate cancer treatment.

So, should you follow your doctor's advice? That's up to you. You should probably get a second opinion anyway, but it sounds like your current doctor is pretty progressive and knows the right course of treatment for you – that is, if you're not too stubborn to admit it and make the necessary changes in your daily life. Just because you're 65 doesn't mean you can't teach an old dog (that's you, my friend) new tricks and learn to live a healthier lifestyle.

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*Jim Evans is a 38-year veteran of the health and fitness industry and a nationally recognized consultant on fitness for seniors. He is chairman of the advisory council for the Retired & Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) in San Diego County (CA), and host of the popular radio talk show "Forever Young" on San Diego's KCBQ 1170 AM ([www.fyradio.biz](http://www.fyradio.biz)) focusing on issues of health, fitness, and quality of life.*