INTRODUCTION TO EXERCISE FOR YOUR GASTROINTESTINAL HEALTH

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GENERAL HEALTH BENEFITS FROM EXERCISE

- Reduce risk of cardiovascular and endocrine disease
- Muscle and bone health
- Improved sleep, reduce anxiety and depression

IMPACT OF EXERCISE ON GI SYSTEM

- Exercise can improve gastric emptying and lower the risk of colon cancer
- Light to Moderate Exercise
  - is typically well tolerated and beneficial for patients with inflammatory bowel disease and liver disease
- Severe exhaustive exercise
  - Inhibits gastric emptying
  - Interferes with gastrointestinal absorption
  - Causes many GI symptoms- nausea, reflux, abdominal cramping, occasionally gastrointestinal bleeding
IMPACT OF EXERCISE ON GI SYSTEM

• GERD is common especially amongst trained and non trained runners
• Strenuous exercise can cause belching, abdominal fullness, regurgitation, heartburn and chest pain in up to 45-90% of athletes
• Running is a vigorous exercise and has high degree of body movement and according to studies show the most reflux in duration and frequency

IMPACT OF EXERCISE ON GI SYSTEM

• Stationary biking achieves aerobic training with little body agitation and according to studies show the least amount of reflux
HOW DO I REDUCE SYMPTOMS OF GERD WITH EXERCISE?

• Don’t eat right before you exercise, fasting recommended before exercise
• Cycling recommended instead of running due to less body movement

WHAT’S THE EVIDENCE SAY FOR INFLAMMATORY BOWEL DISEASE (IBD) AND CROHN’S DISEASE

• IBD – is an umbrella term used to describe disorders that cause chronic inflammation of the GI tract
• Types of IBD:
  ➢ Crohn’s disease - inflammation of the lining of the digestive tract which spreads deep into affected tissues
  ➢ Ulcerative Colitis – causes long-lasting inflammation and sores (ulcers) in lining of large intestine
• Low intensity/low impact exercise in moderate duration for example light walking 3x/week showed general health, quality of life and perceived stress significantly improved without disease exacerbation.
EXERCISE AND GASTRIC EMPTYING

- Gastric emptying is the time it takes for food to empty from the stomach into your small intestines
- Low intensity exercise has been shown to accelerate gastric emptying whereas vigorous exercise slows it down

CONSTIPATION AND GASTROINTESTINAL MOTILITY WITH EXERCISE

- Gastrointestinal (GI) motility is how quickly food moves through our digestive system
- There is some research that supports low intensity physical activity as a treatment for some types of constipation.
- Walking, biking, swimming
- Yoga with diaphragmatic (belly) breathing
DIARRHEA AND URGENCY WITH EXERCISE

- Diarrhea and urgency (needing to quickly find bathroom within minutes after feeling urge to poop) can occur with long distance or marathon runners
- During extreme exertion there is decrease in blood flow to small and large intestine which can decrease absorption of nutrients and impair water reabsorption causing diarrhea
- If you have bleeding and persistent diarrhea you should consult your physician as this could be a more severe condition
- If symptoms are mild, alter exercise routine and reduce exertion see if symptoms improve

WHAT’S MY TARGET INTENSITY WITH EXERCISE?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating of Perceived Exertion Borg RPE Scale</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very, very light</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How you feel when lying in bed or sitting in a chair relaxed. Little or no effort.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat hard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target range: How you should feel with exercise or activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very hard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How you felt with the hardest work you have ever done. Don’t work this hard!</td>
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NOW LET’S PUT IT ALL TOGETHER!

• Find an exercise you enjoy!
• Mix it up but be consistent and exercise most days of the week for 30 minutes
• Achieve an intensity with exercise that is somewhat challenging but you could still carry on a conversation
• Need motivation find someone to exercise with or set simple goals for yourself to begin with that you know you can achieve
• Listen to your body, if you are in pain and feeling GI symptoms are getting worse then back down on intensity.
• If symptoms persist with exercise consult your physician

WHAT CAN PHYSICAL THERAPY DO FOR BOWEL DYSFUNCTION?

• Your pelvic floor muscles play an important role in maintaining bowel, bladder continence, provide support to our pelvic floor organs and aid in sexual function
• If you are experiencing the following bowel symptoms you can ask your physician, physician assistant, midwife or nurse practitioner for a referral to see a pelvic floor physical therapist:
  ➢ Excessive straining with bowels movements and incomplete emptying
  ➢ Have the urge to poop but no success
  ➢ Pain prior to, during or after bowel movement in the rectal region and/or abdomen
  ➢ Uncontrollable gas
  ➢ Leakage of stool that occurs with or without warning
  ➢ A feeling that part of your rectum is falling out after having bowel movement
HOW TO FIND A PELVIC FLOOR PHYSICAL THERAPIST NEAR ME

www.aptapelvichealth.org
www.pelvicguru.com
www.hermanwallace.com

RESOURCES

International Foundation for Functional Gastrointestinal Disorders www.iffgd.org