



VitaMin

Vital health information in a minute

The side effects of sitting

Do you spend most of your day sitting? Does a typical day for you include long hours behind the wheel, sitting at a desk or on the couch? Too much sitting can be a drag on your health in a number of ways.

- ▲ **Bad for your heart.** Research suggests that sitting for prolonged periods of time can be bad for your heart and blood vessels.¹ In a study, adults who spent four hours or more each day sitting in front of a TV or other screen had a 125% increased risk of heart-related events (such as chest pain or heart attack) compared with those who had less than two hours of recreational screen time.²
- ▲ **Diabetes risk goes up.** Each extra hour per day spent sitting down increased the odds of type 2 diabetes by 22% in one study.³
- ▲ **Higher risk for cancer.** More time spent sitting was associated with a 10% overall higher cancer risk in women.⁴
- ▲ **More belly fat.** Sitting for long hours has been linked to gaining weight, especially around the waistline.²
- ▲ **Faster aging.** Sitting for long periods of time with little exercise can make cells age faster. According to one study, elderly women with low physical activity and more than 10 hours of sitting daily had cells that were biologically “older” compared with women who were more active.⁵

While 30 minutes of physical activity is a good thing, it may not undo the effects of sitting all day. The key is to break up long periods of sitting by moving your body at more frequent intervals. Challenge yourself to add more exercise to your day, whether it's a power walk on your lunch hour, a few relaxing yoga poses or a quick burst of doing chores around the house.

Sources:

1. American Heart Association. “News release: Sitting too much may raise heart disease risk.” August 15, 2016. <http://news.heart.org/sitting-too-much-may-raise-heart-disease-risk/>
2. Mayo Clinic. “What are the risks of sitting too much?” <http://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/adult-health/expert-answers/sitting/faq-20058005> (last reviewed/updated September 4, 2015)
3. WebMD. “Sitting for Hours May Raise Type 2 Diabetes Risk.” February 2, 2016. <http://www.webmd.com/diabetes/news/20160202/sitting-for-hours-may-raise-your-type-2-diabetes-risk#1>
4. HealthDay. “Too Much Sitting May Raise a Woman's Cancer Risk.” July 14, 2015. <https://consumer.healthday.com/cancer-information-5/mis-cancer-news-102/too-much-sitting-may-raise-a-woman-s-cancer-risk-study-701296.html>
5. University of California – San Diego. “Too much sitting, too little exercise may accelerate biological aging.” ScienceDaily. <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2017/01/170118151544.htm> (last reviewed/updated January 18, 2017)

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