- Health / Medical Awareness

# Health risks of prolonged sitting

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Do you know that there are many health risks of prolonged sitting? Let me share some revealing health information about prolonged sitting taken from various studies and researches appearing in the Internet:

• Do you know that the longer we sit, the higher our exposure to diseases including heart disease and cancer like colon cancer, breast cancer and endometrial cancer. Endometrial cancer is sometimes referred to as uterine cancer. This is a women's disease;

• Do you now that the American Institute for Cancer Research now recommends that adult Americans who sit most of the day should take at least one or two minute activity break every hour;

• Do you know that doctors advise computer aficionados to take a break every hour (every 60 minutes). Taking a short walk down the hall would be a healthier habit than sitting in front of the computer for 2-3 straight hours or more;

• Do you know that the persons who sit for a long time like watching television or reading or writing or using a computer are strong candidates for developing one or more colorectal polyps. Polyps are benign tumors that can become malignant;

• Do you know that persons who have had polyps need to be checked after every few years throughout their lives – because even one polyp increases the risk for colon cancer;

• Do you know that in a research paper presented at a meeting of the American Association for Cancer Research conducted on 1,730 people at the University of Arizona - it was found out that "men who spent 11.38 or more hours a day participating in a sedentary activities (like reading or watching TV0 had a forty-five percent (45%) higher risk of recurrence of colorectal adenoma versus men who spent 6.9 or fewer hours a day engaged in sedentary activities;

• Do you know that a certain epidemiologist of the American Cancer Society by the name of Alpa Patel conducted a study on 123,000 persons. She concluded that the more time people spend sitting, the greater their risk of premature

death. Researchers found out that too much sitting also seems to increase the risk of death particularly due to cardiovascular disease and cancer;

• Do you know that research also found out that sitting for a long time can also cause obesity, metabolic syndrome, increased blood pressure, high blood sugar, excess body fat around the waist and abnormal cholesterol levels;

• Do you know that drivers who are at the wheels of vehicles for 3 to 8 hours or more are "strong sitting risks." Not even outdoor exercise or exercise indoors for a few hours a week to engage in moderate or vigorous activities can offset or mitigate the harmful health effects of too much sitting. Drivers should take regular break to stand up and walk around preferably for at least 1-2 minutes every 60 minutes;

• Do you know that sitting in front of the television for hours, or driving behind the wheels or having meetings for hours are bad for our health. We have to be in motion throughout the day. Why? Because the muscle activity needed for standing and other movement seems to trigger important processes related to the breakdown of fats and sugars within the body.

Here's my own experience with prolonged sitting:

For six (6) years (2005-2011), I have been sitting as a Monetary Board Member of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP). Once a week, (unless there were also special meetings) we had regular board meetings that lasted for more than two (2) hours. Sometimes, meetings then lasted for 5-6 times or more hours. I do not know about the other Monetary Board Members then but after two (2) hours or more of sitting, my back pain started to bother me. I had to stand up, move around or go to the ladies restroom. I realized then that standing up after sitting for at least two (2) hours relieves the aches and pains in my body.

The message that I am conveying to my readers is to remind them that we should not live a sedentary life – we should engage in physical activity. We should engage in some body exercises like taking a 30-minute brisk walk (especially for those over 40 years old) daily at least 5 times a week with exposure to sunlight.

Have a joyful day! (For comments/reactions please send to Ms. Villafuerte's email: villafuerte_nelly@yahoo.com).