



PREVENTION

## Help Patients Avoid COVID Hospitalization

Editorial Staff

With COVID-19 hospitalization and intensive care unit (ICU) rates soaring nationwide and particularly in certain states, *vaccine* is the buzzword these days. But let's not forget about natural options that, while they may not prevent COVID-19 infection, appear to reduce the chances your patients will suffer serious consequences if they do end up contracting the virus.

Case in point: [a new study](#) suggesting adults who score high on an exercise stress test are less likely to be hospitalized due to COVID-19 compared to patients who scored lower. Patients who completed the test between Jan. 1, 2016 and Feb. 29, 2020, received a test for SARS-CoV-2 between Feb. 29, 2020 and May 30, 2020. Among patients who tested positive, peak metabolic equivalents of task (METs), a measure of maximal exercise capacity, were significantly higher in patients not hospitalized compared to patients who were hospitalized.



The researchers' conclusion makes the value of these findings clear: "Maximal exercise capacity is independently and inversely associated with the likelihood of hospitalization due to COVID-19. These data further support the important relationship between cardiorespiratory fitness and health outcomes."

Now for the clinical takeaway: What are *you* doing to assess and improve your patients' cardiorespiratory fitness? If the answer is nothing, you're missing out on an important opportunity, particularly during the COVID pandemic. If you ask a question or two on patients' intake forms, you're taken a step in the right direction. But if you consult patients on exercise and fitness, and provide specific recommendations / an action plan to help guide them toward better fitness - and share the results of this study, then you're not only helping improve their lifelong health and wellness, but also may reduce their risk of hospitalization if infected with the novel coronavirus.

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