Dana-Farber Cancer Institute and Fitbit Partner to Test If Weight Loss Can Prevent Breast Cancer Recurrence

4/27/2016

First of its kind study has potential to create a new standard of treatment for millions of breast cancer patients around the world

BOSTON--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- Dana-Farber Cancer Institute and Fitbit (NYSE:FIT) today announced a partnership to support a potentially ground-breaking study that investigates the impact of weight loss on breast cancer recurrence. The Breast Cancer Weight Loss (BWEL) study, sponsored by the National Cancer Institute and the Alliance for Clinical Trials in Oncology, will enroll nearly 3,200 overweight and obese women with early stage breast cancer to test if weight loss can help prevent their disease from returning. The study will begin in August 2016 and enroll women with breast cancer through oncology practices across the United States and Canada. Fitbit® is donating specific products to help participants stay motivated and engaged while tracking their weight loss journey and allow their coaches to make sure participants meet their weight loss and fitness goals.

According to the American Cancer Society, approximately 20% of women treated for breast cancer today experience a recurrence of the disease, with most of those women developing metastatic breast cancer. Excess body weight has long been linked to an increased risk of developing breast cancer, and growing evidence suggests that obesity is associated with poor prognosis in women diagnosed with early stage breast cancer. However, despite many reports supporting a relationship between weight and breast cancer prognosis, there have been no studies examining the effect of weight loss upon the risk of breast cancer recurrence.

“The increased risk of cancer recurrence linked to excess body weight threatens to limit our progress in treating...
breast cancer and preventing women from dying from this disease,” said Jennifer Ligibel, MD, a breast oncologist in the Susan F. Smith Center for Women’s Cancers at Dana-Farber, and lead investigator of the BWEL trial. “If this study shows that losing weight through increasing physical activity and reducing calories improves survival rates in breast cancer, this could lead to weight loss and physical activity becoming a standard part of the treatment for millions of breast cancer patients around the world.”

To help study investigators closely track activity and weight loss among study participants, each participant will receive a Fitbit Charge HR™ fitness tracker that delivers all-day activity tracking and continuous, wrist-based heart rate tracking. Participants will also receive a Fitbit Aria® Wi-Fi Smart Scale that tracks weight, BMI, lean mass and body fat percentage over time and wirelessly syncs to the Fitbit online or mobile dashboard to help users stay on track towards goals. Lastly, participants will also have access to FitStar™ by Fitbit premium software, which offers personalized video-based exercise experiences on mobile devices.

“It will be a challenge to help hundreds of women lose weight without actually ever meeting them face-to-face,” says Ligibel. “Fitbit products will allow coaches to see how participants are doing in terms of meeting their weight, physical activity and caloric goals, and step in when women need extra support to stay on track.”

Participants in the BWEL study will be randomized to a two-year weight loss intervention, plus either a health education program designed to provide information about breast cancer topics, or to a health education program-alone control group. Patients in the weight loss group will work with a health coach over the phone to help them increase their exercise and reduce calories. Fitbit Charge HR and the Aria Wi-Fi scale are being provided to help patients track progress throughout the study and help them to stay motivated to meet their goals. Coaches will receive the participant’s data with their explicit consent to see how they are doing, give encouragement and a little nudge when needed to help participants stay on track.

“We are thrilled to partner with Dana-Farber Cancer Institute on this type of intervention research, helping find a link between key behavioral changes and breast cancer recurrence and potentially helping reduce the terrible burden of cancer for millions of women and their families worldwide,” said Woody Scal, Chief Business Officer, Fitbit. “At Fitbit, we are focused on giving individuals the data, inspiration and guidance they need to help them reach their health and fitness goals. We hear stories every day about how our products help motivate people be more proactive with their health by being more active, eating smarter, sleeping better, and managing their weight – all of which are so important in preventive health.”

About Dana-Farber Cancer Institute

From achieving the first remissions in childhood cancer with chemotherapy in 1948, to developing the very latest new therapies, Dana-Farber Cancer Institute is one of the world’s leading centers of cancer research and
treatment. It is the only center ranked in the top 4 of U.S. News and World Report's Best Hospitals for both adult and pediatric cancer care. Dana-Farber sits at the center of a wide range of collaborative efforts to reduce the burden of cancer through scientific inquiry, clinical care, education, community engagement, and advocacy. Dana-Farber/Brigham and Women’s Cancer Center provides the latest in cancer care for adults; Dana-Farber/Boston Children’s Cancer and Blood Disorders Center for children. Dana-Farber is dedicated to a unique 50/50 balance between cancer research and care, and much of the Institute's work is dedicated to translating the results of its discovery into new treatments for patients in Boston, and around the world.

About Fitbit, Inc. (NYSE:FIT)

Fitbit helps people lead healthier, more active lives by empowering them with data, inspiration and guidance to reach their goals. As the leader in the connected health and fitness category, Fitbit designs products and experiences that track everyday health and fitness. Fitbit's diverse line of award-winning products includes Fitbit Surge™, Fitbit Blaze™, Fitbit Charge HR™, Alta™, Fitbit Charge™, Fitbit Flex®, Fitbit One® and Fitbit Zip® activity trackers, as well as the Aria® Wi-Fi Smart Scale. Fitbit products are carried in over 50,000 retail stores and more than 63 countries around the globe.

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Source: Fitbit, Inc.

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