

March is Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month

Colon Cancer is Preventable, Treatable, and Beatable

Colorectal cancer is the third leading cause of death in men and women in the United States, with more than 145,000 new cases diagnosed each year. The death rate is dropping because of early screening detection and treatment. Colon cancer is preventable with early detection with screening colonoscopy and treatable if found early. Screening can identify polyps in the colon that can be removed to prevent cancer from developing.

Start screening at 50 (45 if you are African-American) and repeat in 10 years or sooner if you have polyps.

Signs and symptoms of Colon cancer:

- Blood in your stools
- Narrower than normal stools
- Unexplained abdominal pain
- Unexplained change in bowel habits
- Unexplained anemia
- Unexplained weight loss

Your chances for colon cancer increase if you have:

- Family history of colorectal cancer or polyps
- Multiple family members with certain other cancers
- History of inflammatory bowel disease If so, you may need to have colonoscopy earlier than 50

Key factors to prevent colon cancer

- Get your colonoscopy
- Stay away from high fat food
- Maintain a diet that is high in fruits and vegetables Lose weight, if you are obese
Moderate exercise at least 30 minutes at least 5 days a week Stop smoking
Reduce alcohol consumption to less than 4 drinks per week

For more information or to find a doctor, please call (800) 420-4004.