



HEALTHY OUTCOMES

*March is National
Colorectal Cancer
Awareness Month*

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3 Easy Tips to Help Prevent Colorectal Cancer

By Geisinger Wellness

You may have heard this before, but we can't say it enough: Regular colon cancer screenings and doctor's visits can save lives and help catch colon cancer in its early stages.

Colon and rectal cancer, also known as colorectal cancer, affects both men and women, and all racial and ethnic groups. Often there are no warning signs or symptoms of the disease until it reaches advanced stages, which is why routine screenings are so important.

As we age, the risk of colorectal cancer increases. Smoking, poor diet and having a family history of colorectal cancer or polyps can also increase your chances of developing colon cancer – **which is why it's important to take care of your health now and help lower your risk for the future.**

Here are three simple steps you can take to help decrease your chances for colon cancer.

1. Regular colorectal cancer screenings

Colorectal cancer can develop as abnormal cells called polyps. These growths are noncancerous to start but can develop into colorectal cancer in 10 to 15 years or in some cases sooner depending on how aggressive they are. Once found, polyps can be removed quickly – the earlier the cancer is found, the easier it is to treat, and if found early enough often chemotherapy can be avoided.

“Colon cancer is very treatable and even curable if it's caught before it can progress to later stages,” explains Dr. Julie Woods, an oncologist at Geisinger. “Unfortunately, patients often don't have symptoms. Early intervention is only possible through preventative steps.”

With regular screenings, including colonoscopy, depending on your age and medical history, you can lower your risk.

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The HCQU works with intellectual disabilities and behavioral health programs in Central PA to provide health care management services for adults with Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities or Autism. Our goal is that all people living in PA, regardless of ability, receive the finest community services available – assuring that they are as healthy as possible and can fully participate in community life. The HCQU works to enhance access to community physical and mental health care through **FREE** education, public health outreach, advocacy and empowerment as well as to improve health care outcomes. Serving the following counties: Blair, Centre, Columbia/Montour/Snyder/Union, Huntingdon/Mifflin/Juniata, Lycoming/Clinton, Northumberland and Schuylkill.

The information offered in this newsletter is to increase your awareness of health-related situations. It is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice. If you believe you or someone you support has a condition, please seek the advice of a physician.

TAKE ACTION!

It's Time to Stop Putting off Your Colonoscopy

By Geisinger Wellness

Putting off your colonoscopy until next year... again? There's nothing to be afraid of! Here's exactly what you can expect and how the procedure has changed—for the better.

Colorectal cancer is the second leading cancer killer in the US, but those diagnosed have a 90% survival rate when it's detected early. With one in three adults over the age of 50 passing on the recommended tests for colon cancer, it's time to clear things up about colonoscopies.

"Fear and anxiety. Those are the biggest reasons people are opting out of this incredibly important colon cancer screening," said Dr. Christopher Buzas, Geisinger board-certified and fellowship-trained colorectal surgeon.

But you're looking to change that—you're looking to get on top of things and get ready for your first colonoscopy. Because there's nothing to be afraid of.

What exactly happens at a colonoscopy exam?

Colonoscopies are the best way to detect colon cancer

early. The procedure is quite simple—it typically takes 30 to 60 minutes and you'll be able to return to normal activities the following day.

During a colonoscopy, your doctor will use a long, flexible tube called a colonoscope. It has a tiny video camera at the tip of it which allows the doctor to view the inside of the entire colon. This procedure pinpoints changes or abnormalities in the colon and rectum and is an opportunity for your doctor to remove any abnormal tissue such as polyps.

"Tissue samples, or biopsies, can be taken during a colonoscopy to determine if a change or abnormality is cancerous," says Dr. Buzas. "In many cases, we can remove tumors during colonoscopies before they develop into cancer."

While anesthesia is an option for the procedure, some people decide to pass on receiving it. It could shorten the procedure time by up to half, but the option is always yours. If you do choose to take anesthesia, be sure to arrange for someone to drive you to and from your appointment.

What seems to scare people off most is the preparation before the procedure. Preparation for a colonoscopy typically consists of a liquid-only diet and the use of laxatives the day before. However, depending on your doctor, this may be slightly altered.

What is colonoscopy prep like?

The process is significantly easier than it was in the past. You still need to clean out your colon for the colonoscopy to be performed properly—any residue may obscure your doctor's view. This can lead to a longer procedure, a missed polyp, or even the need to repeat the procedure soon.

While, in the past, one large part of colonoscopy prep included drinking a lot of water mixed with laxative and electrolytes the day before your appointment, some doctors are taking things in a slightly different direction today. Sometimes a combination of both liquid and pill laxatives are used, and your dose of laxatives may be split between the night before and the morning of the procedure.

Your doctor may ask you to alter your diet before your procedure as well, having you eliminate solid foods 24 hours before the colonoscopy. Here are some foods you can eat

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**HELP
WANTED!**

An RN Part-time position is available in Centre County working with caregivers of and adult persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities or autism.

If you are interested, please apply online at www.geisinger.org/careers

Keyword – HCQU RN

Questions? Call Cheryl at 570-271-5935

Central HCQU

Spring Day of Learning

Caring for Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

Thursday May 14th, 2020 | 8:15-4:30

Geisinger Medical Center- Hemelright Auditorium

100 N. Academy Ave. Danville, PA 17821

- **Registration** 8:15-9:00 am
- **Getting it Right in the End** 9:00-10:30 am - *Dr. Alexander Nesbitt*, Medical Director UPMC Susquehanna Hospice and Palliative Care (Palliative care services, hospice care, "Living Will" and advanced care planning; societal/ medical bias that endangers individuals w/ IDD who are being cared for with serious or advanced disease)
- **Break** 10:30-10:45 am
- **Human Trafficking-Working with Victims with Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities** 10:45-12:15 pm - *Sadie Jordan*, BA Medical Advocacy Coordinator; The Women's Center, Inc. of Columbia & Montour Counties
- **LUNCH ON YOUR OWN** 12:15pm- 1:30 pm (Cafeteria and Subway on site)
- **Trauma: The Cold We All Catch - A Provider's Journey** 1:30-4:30 pm - *Kim Sanders*, President of Ukeru Systems, a division of Grafton Integrated Health Network (Managing physically aggressive behavior safely without utilizing restraint and seclusion and increasing employee and individual safety; utilizing a trauma-informed approach)

- **Registration deadline: May 7th, 2020.**

To register, email Lesley at lgmurphy@geisinger.edu.

Include your name, title, organization and email address. Questions call 570-271-7240.

FREE CE contact hours for Licensed Nurses. Geisinger Health System is an approved provider of continuing nursing education by the Pennsylvania State Nurses Association, an accredited approver by the American Nurses Credentialing Center's Commission on Accreditation.



3 Easy Tips...

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2. Diet and exercise

Being overweight and living a sedentary lifestyle can greatly increase your chances of developing colorectal cancer. Maintaining a healthy weight and participating in moderate or vigorous activity daily can greatly reduce your risk. Additionally, a wholesome diet high in vegetables, fruit and whole grains can have a positive effect.

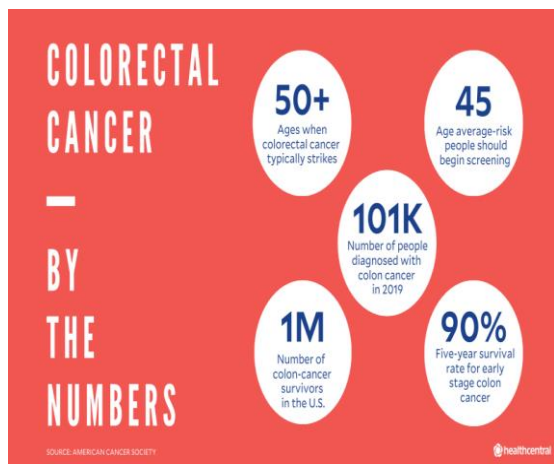
“Adding high fiber foods, like whole grains, can help fight colon cancer,” says Dr. Woods. “Increasing these foods and altering your diet can decrease your risk.” By limiting your intake of red and processed meats and increasing fiber, you can avoid the added risk.

3. Avoiding alcohol and smoking

Drinking excessively and long-term smoking can not only cause colorectal cancer, but several other cancers as well. The chance of developing this disease is greatly reduced when a person drinks less or lives smoke free. Quitting smoking, even if you smoked frequently in the past, is a huge step toward prevention. These little daily changes are the easiest way for you to become your own health advocate!

As a reminder, the American Cancer Society recommends colorectal screenings begin at age 45 for men and women who have an average risk for the disease, with rescreening every 10 years (or more frequently depending on your risk).

To help assess your risk, the National Cancer Institute offers a free assessment tool for colorectal cancer at <https://ccrisktool.cancer.gov/>. ■



Take Action...

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during the three to four days leading up to your exam: eggs, fish, lean meats, low fiber foods, well cooked vegetables (no skin), and white bread.

You should avoid eating these foods in the days leading up to your colonoscopy: fatty foods, nuts and seeds, legumes, popcorn, raw vegetables, tofu, tough meat, and whole grains.

Also, avoid food or drinks containing red, blue or purple food coloring, which could be mistaken for blood during your exam. You may not be able to eat or drink anything after midnight the night before your colonoscopy.

Be sure to look over the instructions your doctor gives you to ensure the process goes as smoothly as possible and doesn't need to be repeated sooner than necessary.

"Even though colonoscopy prep may not be your favorite life experience, it's the first step toward potentially saving your life," says Dr. Buzas. These aren't something anyone looks forward to, but the positives outweigh the negatives by a landslide. ■

Special Needs Resource Fair

3/28/2020

10AM-1PM

Susquehanna Valley Mall

Learn about resources, gather information and meet service providers from the 10 rural counties in Central PA: Columbia, Montour, Northumberland, Lycoming Union, Snyder, Juniata, Mifflin, Perry, and Schuylkill

Attendee registration at www.autismandbehaviorresources.com or by calling your state representative
Registration is not required to attend

Exhibitor application at www.autismandbehaviorresources.com
Looking for exhibitors representing schools, camps, social skills programs, art programs, medical & therapeutic services and equipment, educational supports, behavioral services, estate planning, legal services, transitional programs, vocational programs, parent support groups and more.

For more information contact Erin Demcher 410.404.2036

UNSCRAMBLE THE WORDS

(The words are taken from this month's articles and ads)

nailimeet _____

dinmight _____

recollacto creanc _____

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unsquashane _____

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*From the HCQU
to YOU,
Welcome*



PPC Meeting

The next PPC meeting will be held April 28, 2020
from 10 a.m. to 12 noon
Location to be determined.

ANSWERS TO WORD SCRAMBLE: *Eliminate, midnight, colorectal cancer, abnormality, Susquehanna, screenings, human trafficking, palliative, procedure, intervention, sedentary, surgeon, trauma*

Cooking Corner

Traditional Irish Stew

- 2 tbsp vegetable oil
- 1 lb mutton or lamb cutlets (bone removed, cut into 2-inch chunks)
- 2 tbsp plain flour
- 2 lb potatoes (peeled and cut into quarters)
- 1 cup onion (roughly chopped)
- 1 cup leeks (cleaned and finely sliced)
- 1 cup carrots (roughly chopped)
- 1½ pints dark beef stock
- 2 or 3 cabbage leaves (thinly sliced)
- Salt and Pepper (to taste)



Heat oven to 350°F. In large frying pan heat half the oil to hot, but not smoking. Add half the lamb and brown all over. Remove to a casserole. Cover with half of the potatoes, onions, leeks, and carrots. Add remaining oil to frying pan, heat again and add remaining lamb. Brown all over and add to casserole. Cover with remaining vegetables. Add flour to frying pan and stir well to soak up fat and juices. Cook on gentle heat for 3 minutes. Add stock a ladle at a time until you have a thick, lump-free sauce. Pour over lamb and vegetables. Add remaining stock to casserole, cover with tightfitting lid, cook in oven for 1 hour. Add cabbage, replace lid and cook another hour. Check from time to time to make sure stock isn't reducing too much, as meat and vegetables should always be covered by liquid. If the sauce is too runny at the end, cook a little longer with lid removed. Season with salt and pepper. Serve piping hot. Perhaps a little crusty bread would be good with it to soak up all that fabulous gravy.

CENTRAL PA HEALTH CARE QUALITY UNIT (HCQU)

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- Centre Co.** – TBD
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