

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

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MARCH IS COLORECTAL CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

HOPEWELL, VA. March is Colorectal Cancer Awareness & Prevention Month. Excluding skin cancers, colorectal cancer is the third most common cancer diagnosed in both men and women in the United States. The American Cancer Society estimates 97,220 new cases of colorectal cancer in 2018.

It's more imperative than ever to screen for this cancer now affecting Americans under the age of 50. In fact the American Cancer Society (ACS) reported 72% of new diagnoses among people in their 40s.

But there's good news! Colorectal cancer is treatable with high success rates when caught in the early stages. This is why screening is critical. A colonoscopy removes polyps (where colon cancer starts) for tissue biopsy and analysis in order to rule out or detect cancer.

If cancer is found, a team of physicians creates treatments based on its stage and severity and the patient age and risk factors. Treatment may involve surgery and/or chemotherapy. (If cancer is detected during your colonoscopy and the polyps are very small, your doctor may recommend removing them during your procedure).

Some risk factors for developing colorectal cancer include:

- Obesity
- Family history
- History of inflammatory bowel disease
- Diet high in fat and low in fiber
- Lifestyle factors, including drinking alcohol, smoking, lack of exercise
- Diabetes

Early colorectal cancer may not cause any symptoms, so regular screening are important. Screening is the #1 way to reduce the risk colorectal cancer.

If you are over 50 and have not yet had a screening, contact your primary care physician to schedule one soon.

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