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Colon Cancer is Preventable, Treatable and Beatable

All Insurance companies are mandated by SB1467 to cover the cost of screening colonoscopies for all patients over the age of 50. For more information visit <http://www.acg.gi.org/patients/patientinfo/coloncancer.asp> <http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/colorectal/> (Call CDC Info 1-800-232-4636) <http://www.bnl.gov/HR/occmcd>

FACTS

- Colorectal Cancer is America's # 2 cancer killer.
- It affects men and women equally, 93% of cases occur in people over the age of 50.
- More than 90% of colon cancer deaths can be prevented with timely removal of pre-cancerous polyps.
- One of the few cancers that can actually be prevented by assessing risks and being screened in a timely manner.

ARE THERE ANY SYMPTOMS?

- Most early cancers present with no symptoms
- Change in bowel habits-diarrhea or constipation
- Rectal bleeding
- Dark stools.
- Incomplete bowel emptying
- Bloating fullness or cramps
- Unexplained weight loss
- Constant tiredness with or without anemia

WHO SHOULD GET SCREENED?

If you have one of the following-see your doctor for earlier screening

- Family history of colon cancer or polyps.
- History of Crohn's disease or Ulcerative Colitis. Regular Screening
- Over the age of 50 (over the age of 45 for African Americans)

SCREENING; Colon cancer always develops from precancerous polyps (abnormal growths) in the colon or the rectum. Screening tests can find polyps, so that they can be removed before they turn cancerous and can also detect early cancer.

SCREENING METHODS

1. Fecal occult blood test

- Checks for hidden blood in your stools annually.
- Test cards are used to check 3 consecutive stool specimens.
- You return cards to lab or the Dr's office.
- In conjunction with a flexible sigmoidoscopy every 5 years.
- Colonoscopy done if blood is detected.

2. Flexible sigmoidoscopy

- The doctor examines the rectum and the lower part of your stomach using a flexible lighted tube that is inserted into the rectum.
- Does not examine the rest of the colon.

3. Colonoscopy

- MOST EFFECTIVE procedure for finding and removing polyps.
- Recommended every 5-10 years for screening individuals with average risk around the age of 50.
- Recommended 5-10 years earlier for African-Americans (age 40-45).
- A thin lighted flexible tube called a colonoscope is inserted into the rectum after a bowel prep (under light sedation) to view the entire colon.
- Finding and removing polyps and early cancer is easier.

Are there any symptoms?
Who should get screened?
Insurance mandated coverage