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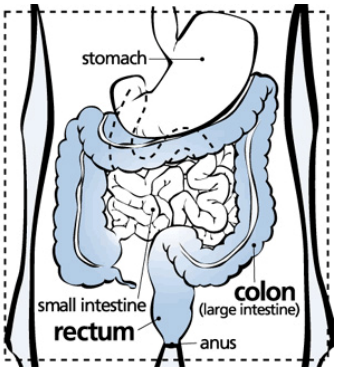
Break the Silence: Colon Cancer Screenings Save Lives

By Emily Moses Mandell

The words associated with the third most common type of cancer in the United States might make you squirm: colon and rectum.

This year alone, more than 150,000 people in the United States will develop cancers of the colon and rectum, often referred to as colorectal cancer when discussed together.

Projections from the American Cancer Society state more than 55,000 people will lose their lives from colorectal cancer in 2006.



So it's time to stop squirming and do something to prevent yourself from becoming a victim.

If there is an upside to colorectal cancer, it's that it can be treated effectively and with success if found early.

Nine out of 10 people whose colon cancer is discovered early will be alive five years later, according to the American Cancer Society. In fact, colon cancer may not affect your lifespan at all if caught early.

Medical professionals use two procedures to check for colorectal cancer: the sigmoidoscopy and the colonoscopy.

The procedures are not painful and take very little time to perform. The worst part of the procedures for many is the anticipation.

The procedures are used to closely exam the inside of the colon, searching for polyps and other signs of cancer.

During a colonoscopy, a doctor inserts a slender, flexible, lighted, hollow tube into the rectum and advances it through the colon. The tube has a tiny video camera that transmits pictures to a video monitor. Patients are sedated before the procedure.

A sigmoidoscopy is similar, but requires no medicine to make patients drowsy. It requires the use of a similar, but shorter tube to perform the procedure that inspects the lower parts of the colon for signs of cancer or polyps.

If you are 50 or older and have not had a colonoscopy, it's time to talk to your doctor. Don't let yourself become a statistic because you fear or are embarrassed by one of the procedures. The benefits outweigh a misplaced sense of modesty.

DPH Works to Raise Awareness About Diabetes in Minority Communities

Type 2 Diabetes Affecting Adults, Youth

The epidemic of type 2 diabetes within minority communities has profound consequences for the quality of life of individuals of any age and their families.

African-Americans, American Indians, Alaska natives, Asian-Americans, Pacific Islanders and Hispanics are at high risk for type 2 diabetes and are disproportionately affected by the disease.

"If we do not turn back this epidemic, minority communities will suffer with widespread disability and premature death. The nation will need to spend billions more for diabetes care," said William D. Hacker, M.D., commissioner of the Kentucky Department for Public Health. "Kentuckians need to recognize the dangers of the disease and practice preventive measures. This is the most effective means we have in curbing rates of diabetes."

According to the Kentucky Diabetes Prevention and Control Program and the National Diabetes Education Program (NDEP), this negative trend can be reversed by making better choices about the kinds of food we eat, the amount of exercise we get and the way we live our lives.

"Diabetes prevention is proven, possible and powerful," said Linda Leber, education coordinator for the Kentucky Diabetes Prevention and Control Program. "Big rewards can be achieved by losing 5 to 7 percent of body weight through healthy eating and getting 30 minutes of physical activity five days a week."

According to DPH, losing a small amount of weight can help those who are at-risk prevent or delay the onset of this devastating disease. Controlling diabetes can slow or halt the loss of sight, limbs and life.

NDEP provides free materials that can help get you started in preventing or controlling diabetes. NDEP's "Small Steps. Big Rewards. Prevent type 2 Diabetes" public education campaign can help increase diabetes prevention awareness. The NDEP materials offer ideas for adhering to a healthy eating plan and ideas for staying active with regular physical activity.

For those already diagnosed with diabetes, the NDEP's "Control Your Diabetes For Life" materials teach diabetics

to know their ABCs. A is for the A1C test for blood glucose (blood sugar), B for blood pressure, and C for cholesterol.
People should know what these numbers are, what they should be, and how to work with a health care team to reach goals.

Other risk factors associated with the development of type 2 diabetes include family history, pre-diabetes, overweight/obesity, lack of physical activity, being 45 and older, history of gestational diabetes or having a baby that weighs more than 9 pounds at birth, high blood pressure, cholesterol levels, polycystic ovarian syndrome and history of vascular disease.

To order the free NDEP materials go to www.ndep.nih.gov or call (800) 438-5383. For more information about diabetes, visit the Kentucky Diabetes Prevention and Control Program Web site at www.chfs.ky.gov/dph/ach/diabetes.

Meats, Beans Provide Unrivaled Benefits
The meats and beans group is a valuable source of many nutrients. Protein, the B vitamins, vitamin E, iron, zinc and magnesium provide benefits numerous benefits to the body that are unmatched by other food groups.

Protein is used by the body for construction, maintenance and repair of body tissues.

The group of B vitamins includes:

- Niacin - helps capture and use energy from the foods you eat; helps maintain nervous system functions.
- Thiamin - helps body use energy from the foods you eat; facilitates growth and maintenance of nerve and muscle tissue; promotes normal appetite.
- Riboflavin - helps capture and use energy from the foods you eat; promotes growth and tissue repair; promotes normal vision.
- B6 - needed tissue building; needed for normal red blood cell formation; promotes normal nervous system function.
- Vitamin E - antioxidant that prevents damage to cell membranes; decreases ability of LDL cholesterol to form plaque in arteries.
- Iron - transports oxygen; aids in energy formation.
- Zinc - needed for protein reproduction; component of insulin and many enzymes.
- Magnesium - component of bones and teeth; involved in energy and protein formation; needed for nerve activities.

Make your meat and bean choices lean.

Beans are low in fat and high in fiber. Limit the oils or fats you add to your bean dishes to keep them lean.

The leanest cuts of beef include round steaks, roasts, top loin and top sirloin. Check the label when you buy ground beef to be sure it is at least 90 percent lean ground beef. When buying poultry, skinless chicken or turkey breasts are the leanest choices.

Additional ways to make your meat lean:

- Choose fresh meats in place or processed or packaged.
- Don't fry.
- Trim all visible fat.
- Drain fat after cooking.
- Avoid breading the meat, this allows it to soak up fat.

Keep your servings of meat reasonable:

- A serving of meat is 3 ounces. This is about the size of a deck of cards.
- A serving of fish is 3 ounces. This is about the size of a checkbook.
- A serving of peanut butter is 2 tablespoons. This is about the size of a golf ball.

KDN Receives National Honor
The Kentucky Diabetes Network was honored recently by the National Association of Chronic Disease Directors, receiving the organization's 2006 Public Policy Award. The honor, which was presented by NACDD Director John Robitscher at a recent meeting at the Kentucky History Center in Frankfort, is given to an organization or coalition that has been effective in promoting policy change that reduces the chronic disease burden on a national, state or local level.

The Kentucky Diabetes Network was nominated for its accomplishments in advocating for new state funding to the Kentucky Diabetes Prevention and Control Program and developing tools to assist health care providers and insurers in responding to patients with diabetes.

Flex Account Deadline Nears
By Anya Armes Weber

Friday, March 31, is the deadline to make claims toward your 2005 flexible spending account.

Request forms, receipts and appeals of 2005 medical and day care services must be postmarked to Fringe Benefits Management Co. by that date. The company's address is P.O. Box 1800; Tallahassee, FL 32302-1800.

Check account information at (800) 865-FBMC (3262) or online at www.fbmc-benefits.com.
The FBMC customer service line is (800) 342-8017.

FBMC no longer coordinates the state's flexible spending accounts.

Golf Scramble to Benefit SNAP
By Anya Armes Weber

Proceeds from a charity golf scramble next month will benefit the Cabinet's Special Needs Adoption Program and its recruitment efforts.

The Kentucky Mulligan Invitational will be Monday, April 10, at the University of Louisville's Cardinal Club, at 401 Champions Way, Simpsonville. Former University of Kentucky basketball standouts Jimmy Dan Conner and Cameron Mills will be special guests.

Registration starts at 11 a.m., and shotgun start is at 1 p.m. Cost for a two-person team is $180.

The entry fee includes a 5:30 p.m. clinic with the Cardinal Club's director of instruction, Tim Schulz. Dinner is at 6 p.m. and features Conner and Mills as keynote speakers. Prizes will be awarded.

Employees who participate must use leave time.

The event is sponsored by the Mulligan Society of Kentucky and CBMC. The nonprofit groups will use their proceeds to support three adoption programs, including SNAP.

Make a reservation or get more information by calling Ginger Davis at (859) 333-1892 or e-mailing cbmclex@insightbb.com.

CHFS Health Tip of the Week: March is Save Your Vision Month
Healthy lifestyle choices can improve your chances of avoiding eye diseases and conditions that can permanently impair vision. Follow these tips for good eye health.

Wear UV Protection in Sunglasses and Eyeglasses - Your eyes need extra protection to prevent UV-related damage to internal eye structures such as the cornea, crystalline lens, and retina.
Wear Sunglasses and Broad-Brimmed Hats in Bright Sunlight - Sunglasses and hats help protect your eyes from potentially damaging ultraviolet light associated with bright sunlight, which can lead to eye diseases such as cataracts and macular degeneration.

Practice Good Hygiene if You Wear Contact Lenses - Many contact lens wearers don't realize bad hygiene can lead to some very scary and, in fact, blinding complications caused by spread of bacterial infection into delicate structures of your eye, including the optic nerve essential for sight. Practice good hygiene by making sure lenses are cleaned with proper solutions, and by following manufacturer guidelines about how to store lenses. Also, make sure you discard disposable lenses in a timely way according to manufacturer recommendations.

Wear Appropriate Safety Glasses or Other Eye Protection for Work or Play - Wear certified industrial grade goggles and eye shields appropriate for various trades, including welding. Make sure your eyes are protected if you engage in certain sports.

Engage in Regular Aerobic Exercise - Scientific evidence indicates the boost in heart rate and blood circulation from aerobic exercise can help maintain the health of crucial eye structures like the optic nerve that transmits images from the eye to the brain.

Employee Enrichment
By Anya Armes Weber

Employee Enrichment is a weekly feature for CHFS staff. These tips for making work better focus on team building, customer service and personal development.

A colleague is praised for a project you both worked on. Another office gets an assignment you think your staff is better experienced to complete. A friend at the office is promoted to a job you expected to get.

Any of these situations might cause someone to feel workplace resentment. How you would cope with such resentment can dramatically affect your life both professionally and personally.

Personal coach Andriette Earl-Bozeman, author of "Embracing Wholeness," says we must get past resentment if we want to preserve our office relationships and be accepted as a part of a mostly harmonious team. Try to be gracious to a co-worker who has accomplished something you wanted. Negativity is disruptive to any workplace, and bitterness isn't a quality of many high achievers.
Earl-Bozeman also suggests allowing a personal resentment to fester can be self-destructive. This kind of resentment may show itself in habits like eating too much, smoking, drinking alcohol or abusing drugs.
Try to stay positive, she says. Visualizing your hoped success may help you work to make it real.