



Understanding Colorectal Cancer: Awareness, Prevention, and Early Detection

Colorectal cancer, which affects the colon and rectum, is one of the most common types of cancer. However, with growing awareness, improved screening methods, and advancements in treatment, the outcomes for those diagnosed have significantly improved. In this post, we'll explore what colorectal cancer is, who is at risk, and the steps you can take for prevention and early detection.

What Is Colorectal Cancer?

Colorectal cancer begins when abnormal cells in the colon or rectum start to grow uncontrollably. Over time, these cells can form polyps—small clumps of cells that can become cancerous if left untreated. Early-stage colorectal cancer often presents no symptoms, which is why screening is so crucial.

Risk Factors and Warning Signs

Understanding risk factors and recognizing warning signs can empower you to take proactive steps toward early detection and prevention.

Key Risk Factors

- **Age:** Most cases are diagnosed in individuals aged 50 and older, though rates in younger populations are rising.
- **Family History:** A family history of colorectal cancer or polyps increases your risk.
- **Lifestyle Choices:** Diets high in red and processed meats, lack of physical activity, obesity, and smoking have been linked to an increased risk.
- **Chronic Inflammatory Conditions:** Conditions such as ulcerative colitis or Crohn's disease can heighten the risk of developing colorectal cancer.
- **Genetic Factors:** Inherited conditions like familial adenomatous polyposis (FAP) or Lynch syndrome can lead to a higher risk.

Warning Signs

Although early colorectal cancer may not present symptoms, later stages can include:

- Changes in bowel habits, including diarrhea or constipation
- Blood in the stool or rectal bleeding
- Unexplained weight loss
- Persistent abdominal discomfort or cramps
- Fatigue or weakness

If you experience any of these symptoms, consult your healthcare provider for further evaluation.

The Importance of Screening

Since early colorectal cancer is often asymptomatic, regular screening is essential, especially for those over 50 or with a family history of the disease. Screening tests can help detect polyps before they become cancerous and identify cancer at an early, more treatable stage.

Common Screening Methods

- **Colonoscopy:** Considered the gold standard, a colonoscopy allows doctors to examine the entire colon and rectum, remove polyps, and perform biopsies if needed.
- **Flexible Sigmoidoscopy:** This procedure examines the lower part of the colon and rectum.
- **Stool Tests:** Tests like the fecal immunochemical test (FIT) or stool DNA test can detect hidden blood or abnormal DNA in the stool.
- **CT Colonography (Virtual Colonoscopy):** A non-invasive imaging test that produces a detailed view of the colon and rectum.

Discuss with your healthcare provider which screening method is best for your situation.

Prevention Through Lifestyle Changes

While some risk factors for colorectal cancer are beyond your control, many lifestyle changes can help reduce your risk:

- **Healthy Diet:** Focus on a diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins. Limit red and processed meats.
- **Regular Exercise:** Aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise each week to help maintain a healthy weight.
- **Limit Alcohol and Avoid Smoking:** Both alcohol consumption and smoking have been linked to an increased risk of colorectal cancer.
- **Stay Informed:** Regular check-ups and screenings can detect early signs of cancer, making treatment more effective.

Treatment Options and Outlook

If diagnosed with colorectal cancer, treatment options vary based on the stage and location of the cancer. They may include surgery, chemotherapy, radiation therapy, targeted therapy, or a combination of these approaches. Early detection is key, as it can significantly improve the prognosis and open the door to less invasive treatment options.

Final Thoughts

Colorectal cancer is a significant health concern, but awareness, regular screening, and lifestyle modifications can dramatically reduce your risk. By taking control of your health today, you're investing in a healthier future. If you're in the screening age group or have risk factors, speak with your healthcare provider about scheduling a screening and taking preventive measures. Remember, early detection saves lives. Stay informed, stay proactive, and encourage your loved ones to do the same.



Applying for Promotion: Tips and Prep

Applying for a promotion? Here are some tips on how to prepare for your interview.

When you apply for a new job, it is important to prepare for the interview process. Start by thinking about your short- and long-term career goals and how the position you are applying for fits into that plan.

1. Research:

- Read the job description carefully and research the company or department website. Review and understand the company's values and operations.

2. Practice

- Practice answering potential questions. Questions you encounter in the initial screening (HR) interview may be basic and focused on assessing your experience level as it relates to the job. Questions at the manager's level or 2nd interview will likely be more specific and focused on the day-to-day job responsibilities.

3. Prepare

- Be ready to explain your interest in the position and why you are qualified for the role. Be ready to summarize your experience and relate it back to the job you are interviewing for.
- Be sure to dress appropriately, arrive early, and bring multiple copies of your application materials, resume and transcripts if required.
- During the interview listen carefully to each question, remain positive, and be aware of your body language and tone of voice.
- Bring questions you have about the job and ask them at the end of the interview if time allows.
- Be sure to thank the people who interviewed you as leave.

4. Follow up

- Send a thank you email or note to the interview team.

Only follow up again if they indicated that you should hear back within a specific timeframe and that time has run out. Many times, a hiring process will get delayed so allow for that before calling or emailing to check the status. Even if you don't get the job this time, going through the application and interview process is a part of the learning experience and you can take any feedback you receive and use it to have a better interview the next time.

To apply for a job at the City of Tulsa and see our job openings and promotion opportunities, please visit www.cityoftulsa.jobs



National Ladder Safety Month

March 2025 is the National Ladder Safety Month. Each year 500,000+ people are treated for ladder-related falls, 300+ deaths from ladder falls, and \$24B is spent in the US for work loss, medical, legal, liability, and pain and suffering from falls. Whether you're using a ladder at home or at work, these numbers affect you. To help prevent ladder-related injuries, the American Ladder Institute recommends the following.

Choosing your ladder

One of the most common mistakes made by ladder users is choosing the wrong ladder for the job. Here are some things to consider:

Take into account your work environment when choosing your ladder.

For example, if you're working near sources of electricity, do not use a metal/aluminum ladder. Evaluate the surface on which the ladder will be resting. Is it uneven? Consider if there are any obstructions in the path of the climb. Your environment will also help you determine the type of ladder you need for the task.

Consider the length of the ladder you need.

It is unsafe to use a ladder that is too long or too short. When using a step ladder, for instance, it is unsafe to stand on the top cap as it increases the likelihood of losing your balance. Likewise, when using an extension ladder, the top three rungs are not to be used for climbing. An extension ladder is too long if it extends more than 3 feet beyond the upper support point, because it can act like a lever and cause the base of the ladder to move or slide out.

Pay attention to the Duty Rating of your ladder.

The Duty Rating is the total amount of weight your ladder will support. A taller ladder does not equate to a higher weight rating. When determining what Duty Rating is needed for the job at hand, you need to add your weight plus the weight of everything you will be carrying up the ladder.

Ladder Inspection

- Failing to properly inspect each part of your ladder and your equipment could mean putting yourself in danger.
- Examples of items to inspect include: Locks and pulleys, safety shoes, rung and rail connections, fasteners, ropes, etc.

Safe Positioning and Climbing

Safe Positioning

- Confirm that the ground where the ladder is set up is firm and level or use approved accessories such as ladder levelers. Using a ladder on uneven ground can cause instability, which can lead to serious injury or death.
- Never use blocks, buckets, or other unstable means to level a ladder as those items can slip out or tip over when the ladder is in use causing serious injury or death.
- Ensure all ladder feet are firmly in contact with the ground surface and both top rails of non-self-supporting ladders are firmly in contact with upper surfaces before climbing to avoid instability or slip issues. Ensure the top three rungs of a single or extension ladder are extended above any upper surface where access to that surface is required.
- Never adjust or move an extension ladder from above – only adjust the length and placement from the ground. Ladder locks can be disengaged, foot placement cannot be ensured, and ladder angle cannot be verified when adjusted from above.
- Before climbing, ensure the spreader bars on stepladders are completely open and locked in place and that both ladder locks on extension ladders are completely engaged around the rung.
- Secure the ladder where possible by tying off, blocking, bracing, or having an assistant hold the ladder. Not properly securing a ladder during use can result in issues with stability and slipping. With extension or leaning ladders, ensure the ladder is set up at the proper angle and secured from movement before climbing. A shallow angle increases the risk of sliding out. Using a ladder at too shallow of an angle can cause extreme loading on the ladder, which is outside of the intended load rating.
- Ensure any surrounding doors are blocked from opening, locked, or properly guarded. Using a ladder in front of a door can allow the door to be opened while climbing or working from a ladder causing the ladder to be moved or tipped over while in use, resulting in the user falling.

Safe Climbing

- Always maintain three points of contact while climbing by keeping two hands and one foot or two feet and one hand in contact with the ladder. Climb slowly and deliberately and avoid sudden movements. While ascending or descending the ladder, always be attentive to what you are doing and your surroundings. Use towlines, a tool belt, or an assistant to convey materials so that your hands are free when climbing.
- Never climb, stand, or sit on the top step or top cap of a stepladder. Do not straddle the top of the ladder. These improper positions can affect the stability of the ladder and can cause the user to lose their balance.
- Always keep the center of your stomach between the ladder side rails. Not properly securing a ladder during use can result in issues with stability and slipping. Do not overreach, lean, or pull the ladder sideways while working.
- Never attempt to move a ladder while standing on it. This can result in issues with balance, stability, and slip. It also damages the ladder and can cause premature wear.
- If using a ladder outdoors, ensure that the weather is safe for ladder use. Inclement weather, such as rain, ice, mud, or wind can cause the ladder to slip or become unstable, resulting in serious injury or death.
- Clean the soles of your shoes to maximize traction and avoid slipping.
- Ensure that you are in good health not; influenced by drugs, tired, dizzy, or prone to losing your balance before using the ladder.

For training resources, ladder inspection checklist, and the City's policy on ladder safety, visit the City of Tulsa Safety & training SharePoint.