Health Notes

By Audeen Wagner

COLORECTAL CANCER

It seems that nobody wants to talk about it, hear about it, or even think about it…understandably. Who wants to discuss their lower digestive tract, even with their doctor! This has been the stigma surrounding colon and rectal cancers for a long time.

But this is changing; with more awareness, patients are becoming more knowledgeable and responsive to information about this dangerous disease; the incidence of colorectal cancers is actually on the decrease. However, it is still one of the deadliest cancers. It is estimated that close to 150,000 new cases will be diagnosed this year, and that it will kill about 55,000 Americans in 2006.

What is colorectal cancer and how does it get started? Cancer of the colon or rectum is also called colorectal cancer. It is the fourth most common cancer in the US. In most cases, it develops slowly over a period of several years. It typically begins with a polyp, a growth of tissue on the inner wall of the colon or rectum. A type of polyp known as adenoma can become cancerous; removing the polyp may prevent the cancer from developing. Colorectal screening is the key to prevention and early detection.

Risk Factors: Some risk factors we have no control over, such as age; having a history of polyps; having other bowel disease or family history of cancer or polyps. If any of these are in your past, tell your caregiver and consider colon cancer testing.

Here are some risk factors you CAN do something about to reduce your chances of getting colorectal cancer:

•Diet: A high-fat diet, especially animal fats, increases risk.

•Lack of exercise: People who are inactive have a higher risk.

•Overweight: Those extra pounds contribute to colorectal cancer risk.

•Smoking: We all know that smoking causes lung cancer, but recent studies show that smokers are 30 to 40 percent more likely to die of colorectal cancer.

•Alcohol: Heavy drinkers have higher risk.

Screening: A colonoscopy is the best procedure to find polyps or early colorectal cancer. People in their 50s and older should have this done; patients who are at higher-than-average risk should talk with their caregiver to determine whether to have screening tests done before age 50. The use of screening tests for colon cancers remains relatively low, despite its proven effectiveness; however, the use of this test is increasing.

Judith Hargis, P.A. at Providence Family Medicine, is an enthusiastic booster for colorectal cancer screening, for good reason. Her father died of the disease twelve years ago. "My dad enjoyed extremely good health for all his life until diagnosed with this disease," she says. "But he didn't seek medical care until he had become symptomatic. Prevention and/or early detection are extremely important."

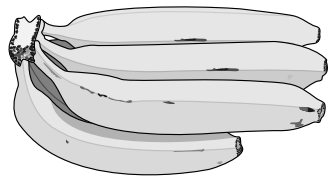
More information? Telephone information is available at the National Cancer Institute. Call 1-800-4-CANCER if you have questions about any cancer. They can answer your questions and can send materials published by NCI. Cancer.gov is NCI's Web site. Or, contact your caregiver if you have any questions or concerns about colorectal cancer.

Potassium plays a role in a good diet, so get your 4,700 mg today

The 2005 Dietary Guidelines highlight the roles of sodium and potassium in blood pressure regulation. Keeping blood pressure in the normal range helps reduce the risk of coronary heart disease, stroke, and kidney disease.

Dietary changes can help prevent or delay the onset of high blood pressure. These changes include reducing salt and increasing potassium intake. Increased potassium may lessen the hypertensive effects of too much sodium. Fruits and vegetables are rich in a form of potassium that may lower the risk of kidney stones and help prevent bone loss. Adults need 4,700 milligrams (mg) of potassium daily. Few adults consume that much.

You can get all the potassium you need from your diet. Potassium-rich fruits and vegetables include root vegetables, leafy greens, and fruits or vegetables from vines. Some of the best potassium choices include a sweet potato (almost 700 mg), a white potato (610 mg), 1/2 c. of canned white beans (595 mg), and 1/2 c. of tomato puree (549 mg). An 8-oz carton of plain yogurt is another good choice (579 mg). A 3-oz serving of halibut or canned yellowfin tuna provides almost 500 mg of potassium. A medium banana has about 422 mg.



Most adults can meet their needs by consuming 2 cups of fruit, 2-1/2 cups of vegetables, and three glasses of milk daily. There are other mix-and-match possibilities. For example, a salad of 1/2 c. soybeans, 1/2 c. white beans, and 3 oz of tuna will provide about 1/3 of the daily intake for potassium. Other good high-potassium snack options include dried apricots, peaches and prunes and prune juice.

It's safer to get potassium from food than supplements. An irregular heartbeat could be a serious side effect of too much potassium. People with kidney disease and advanced diabetes shouldn't increase their potassium intake unless their doctor approves. The same is true for those who take drugs to lower their blood pressure.

Source: Carolyn Raab, OSU Extension food and nutrition specialist

3M Vernonia Cares
Family Fun Run/Walk

Saturday, May 20th

Registration $5.00 $15.00 per family*

Receive a door prize ticket for each 2 cans of food donated

Registration starts at 9:00 am Race starts at 10:00 am
Meet at Vernonia Lake Parking Lot

Questions: Call Julie 503-327-9285

* kids under 12 must be accompanied by an adult. Please no bikes.

MAMMOVAN

The next visit of the Mammovan to Vernonia will be Wednesday, May 17.

Vernonia's
50th
Friendship
Jamboree
Aug. 4th, 5th & 6th

Volunteers to become long term care advocates should call now

Volunteer advocates and investigators are needed to serve as ombudsmen for residents of nursing homes, residential care facilities, assisted living facilities and adult foster care homes. The Office of the Long Term Care Ombudsman will train the volunteers on the aging process, communications skills, problem-solving skills, investigation and other ombudsman skills. Certification training will begin on Thursday, May 4, in Tigard.

As Certified Ombudsmen, the volunteers work to improve the quality of residents' lives by identifying and investigating complaints and concerns on behalf of the residents, then working with the facilities to make changes. The typical concerns ombudsmen address cover a broad range, and often include resident care; residents' rights, such as privacy, respect and dignity; and quality of life concerns such as appropriate activities and meals. "The volunteers make a tremendous difference in the lives of the residents," said Kathy Walter, Program Administrator. "They are well-prepared and effective."

For information about the program or to learn how to get involved, contact Kathy Walter at 1-800-522-2602.

Coupon • Savings Coupon • Savings Coupon • Savings Coupon • Savings Coupon • Savings

Save a Dollar on any Full Breakfast & get your Coffee Free*

Leonetti's Pizza & Grill

721 Madison Ave., Vernonia • 503-429-5018

*One breakfast per coupon offer ends 5-4-06.

Savings Coupon • Savings Coupon • Savings Coupon • Savings Coupon •