

Got polyps? Initiative seeks to boost colorectal cancer screening

Got Polyps? That's the question the Oregon Partnership for Cancer Control (OPCC) is asking Oregonians age 50 and older as it launches a statewide effort to increase colorectal cancer screening. This Oregon campaign uses the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's national Screen for Life educational materials that aim to prevent this deadly disease.

"Colorectal cancer is the second leading cancer killer in Oregon, but it doesn't have to be," said Katrina Hedberg, M.D., M.P.H., an epidemiologist with the Oregon Department of Human Services Public Health Division. "Fortunately, we can prevent many cases of colorectal cancer through screening for and treating precancerous polyps. Yet fewer than half of Oregonians age 50 and older get screened as recommended."

Hedberg said a screening test is useful only if it gets done. Screening can find and remove pre-cancerous polyps that com-

monly form in the colon or rectum. Screening also helps detect colorectal cancer at an early stage when it is most treatable. The exact causes of colorectal cancer are unknown, but the disease is more likely to occur as people age.

Both men and women age 50 and older should talk with their doctor about getting screened. Individuals younger than 50 who have a family history of colorectal cancer may be at increased risk and should talk to their doctor about screening before age 50. High-fat diets, lack of physical activity, drinking alcohol to excess and smoking are thought to play a role in the development of the disease.

Health experts caution individuals age 50 and above not to wait for symptoms to occur to get screened. Polyps and colorectal cancer do not always cause symptoms, especially at first. Additionally, symptoms can be mistaken for other health conditions. Symptoms

can include blood in the stool, frequent gas, a change of bowel habits, pains or indigestion, unexpected weight loss and chronic fatigue.

There are several screening tests for colorectal cancer. These include a blood stool test, sigmoidoscopy, barium enema and colonoscopy. The stool test can detect blood in the stool. A sigmoidoscopy uses a lighted tube to find polyps which can be removed at a later time. The barium enema allows for an X-ray of the colon and rectum. A colonoscopy can find and remove most polyps and some cancers. Most health insurance plans, including Medicaid and Medicare, help pay for screening.

"When it comes to colorectal cancer, we want to prevent it, treat it and beat it," said Sue Frymark, R.N., co-chair of the coalition that is coordinating the Oregon's Got Polyps Screen for Life initiative. "Through this campaign we will connect with

health care providers, cancer survivors and communities from around the state. Screening does save lives."

The Oregon Partnership for Cancer Control (OPCC) is a coalition of more than 100 organizations with a commitment to reducing the burden of cancer in the state. The coalition

launched Oregon's first statewide cancer plan in 2005. The coalition has made increasing screening for colorectal cancer its top priority.

More information about this campaign and the coalition is available at the OPCC Web site, <http://oregon.gov/DHS/ph/cancer/index.shtml>.

Falling from a boat can be deadly

For recreational boaters, a simple fall overboard is the number one boating accident "event" that leads to the most fatalities. The U.S. Coast Guard reports that in 2006, 275 persons died in 721 boating accidents that began with, or involved a fall overboard. While some of these accidents involved other factors, being able to quickly get back in the boat — without help — isn't easy, as a BoatU.S. Foundation test of 11 portable boarding ladders recently found.

"A fall into the water can turn

into a life-threatening situation very quickly," said BoatU.S. Foundation President Ruth Wood, "It doesn't take long for exhaustion or hypothermia to drain the life out of you. Boaters and anglers need to be prepared, especially if you are alone. It can happen to you."

While many larger boats have built-in boarding ladders, the Foundation tested portable models on a 17-foot Boston Whaler, 14-foot Jon boat, and 12-foot rigid-hull inflatable. What follows are five important

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Will you know how to handle the stress if you lose your job?

It isn't news that our nation's economy currently has many problems, problems that are resulting in rising unemployment rates in most parts of the nation.

Losing a job is a traumatic experience, one that can affect each of us in different ways and to different degrees. Being laid off from a company where

you've been a long-time employee and viewed your role as vital certainly increases your sense of loss. Other factors, such as your age, education, skills, the local job market and your family's need for that paycheck, can also increase stress levels.

Increased and prolonged stress can easily put your phys-

ical and mental well-being at risk. That's why it's important to do all you can to cope with job loss if it does occur.

In many ways, losing a job is similar to the sense of loss one experiences when a loved one dies or an important relationship ends. There's often a shock and then denial that this is happening to you.

What follows is often anger, anger that can be damaging if it leaves you bitter and easily irritated, affecting your relationships with friends and family. Or you may try, unrealistically,

to get back that job that no longer exists, and you can easily experience depression and sadness as you question your worth and abilities.

Accepting that such emotional reactions are likely, and often necessary in order for you to move on, can enable you to get through them more quickly and less painfully. When you couple that acceptance with an effort to continue living a normal life, it makes moving on much easier.

After a job loss, you should avoid major life changes that will increase stress levels. Strive to maintain a normal schedule, to eat healthfully, exercise regularly and maintain normal involvement with family

and friends.

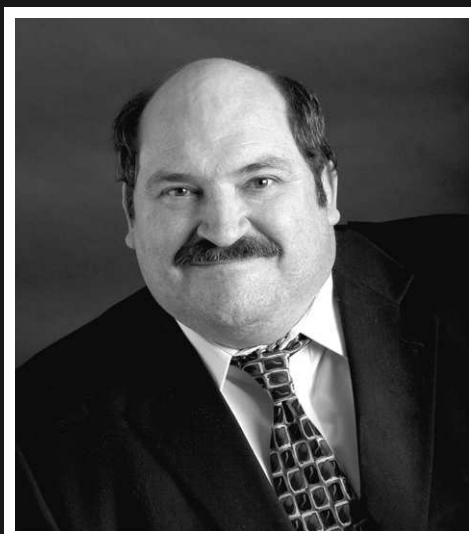
Understand that job loss can initially be frightening, but it can also be an opportunity for new beginnings. Network with friends and colleagues, and stay open to new possibilities and experiences.

Also take advantage of available help. Your employer may be providing employee assistance or outplacement counseling. Or you may seek a private counselor specializing in unemployment issues and career counseling.

Losing a job is a difficult situation, but it's not the end of the world. Don't let the stress it can bring overwhelm your life.

Source: American Counseling Association

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Bunny Girt, Agent

1229 N. Adair
PO Box 543
Cornelius, OR 97113-0543
Bus 503-357-3131 Fax 503-357-9667
bunny.girt.b71g@statefarm.com

