

Colorectal Health Radio Show Activity

Radio Announcer: Hello. Welcome to Wellness Ways Talk radio. Today we have with us several experts to talk about colon health and ways to prevent colorectal cancer. That's right colorectal cancer is almost 100% preventable. The telephone lines are open so call in with your colon health questions. Hello, hello, do I have caller #1.

Caller #1: Wow! This is a really cool radio show. But...what the heck is colorectal cancer? I don't think I have a colorectal anything.

Expert: Thank you for calling. You are right, we don't have colorectals. However, both men and women have colons and rectums. The words colon and rectum are combined to make colorectal. Colorectal cancer means cancer of the colon or rectum. Do I have caller #2?

Caller #2: Who gets colorectal cancer anyways?

Expert: Both men and women can get colorectal cancer. However, more than 90% of colorectal cancers are diagnosed in people who are age 50 or older. Do I have caller #3?

Caller #3: Well I'm 50 years old, so you got me thinking. What causes colorectal cancer?

Expert: Well we don't really know what causes colorectal cancer. The majority of colorectal cancers happen in people with no known risk factors. What we do know is that...colorectal cancer usually starts from polyps in the colon. A polyp is an abnormal growth inside the colon. Over time, some polyps can turn into cancer. Do I have caller #4?

Caller #4: I heard that last expert talking about risk factors. What are the risk factors for colorectal cancer?

Expert: A cancer risk factor is anything that increases your chances of developing a specific kind of cancer. Having an increased risk doesn't mean that you will develop cancer - it just means that you have an increased chance.

Having a family history of colorectal cancer increases your risk for developing colorectal cancer. When we talk about family history, we mean having a first-degree relative, like your mother, father, sister, brother, son or daughter, who has had colorectal cancer. It is a good idea to learn if anyone in your family has had cancer and what kind of cancer and how old they were when they were diagnosed. Sometimes it is not easy to talk about cancer, but it is very important for your health. Do I have caller #5?

Caller #5: Taking care of my health has always been important to me. Is there anything I can do to decrease my risk of developing colorectal cancer?

Expert: Congratulations on taking care of your health. Good for you! There are some choices you can make to decrease your risk of developing colorectal cancer. These may be activities you are already doing.

Being physically active cuts your risk for developing colorectal cancer in half. Other ways to reduce your risk include:

- Eating foods with lots of fiber like fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.
- Choosing to be tobacco free. Tobacco use is highly associated with polyps that may develop into cancer.
- Having recommended colon screening exams to find and remove polyps before they become cancer.

Do I have caller #6?

Caller #6: My doctor told me that I should have colon screening. But I don't have any signs or symptoms so I thought I'd just wait until I had blood in my stool. What are the signs or symptoms of cancer of the colon or rectum anyways?

Expert: A lot of people, when they think of cancer, think of signs or symptoms. BUT there are NO early signs or symptoms of colorectal cancer! Don't wait for symptoms! It is good to have colon screening when you are healthy in order to stay healthy!

If NOT found early, colorectal cancer may cause signs or symptoms. Like

- Blood in or on your stool (bowel movement)
- Stomach pain, aches, or cramps that do not go away
- Losing weight and you don't know why

These symptoms may also be caused by something other than cancer. The only way to know what is causing symptoms is to see your health care provider. Do I have caller #7?

Caller #7: Well I just turned 50. At what age should I begin to have a colorectal screening exam?

Expert: Well, Happy Birthday! Congratulations ...You hit the colon screening jack pot. You are the magic age. Both men and women should begin having a colorectal screening exam at age 50. If everybody started having colorectal screening exams at age 50, or younger if there is a family history of colorectal cancer, we could prevent almost all cancers of the colon and rectum. Now that's something worth celebrating! YAHOO I am ready to celebrate! Do I have caller #8?

Caller #8: I've heard a few stories about that colorectal exam...that I probably shouldn't repeat on day time talk radio. SO...what were they talking about and what kinds of screenings are there for colorectal cancer?

Expert: What people are referring to is probably the preparation for the tests. Before this test, you take a laxative to clean out the colon. The preparation for the test makes you go to the bathroom a lot. Most people consider this the worst part of the test. There are three common types of recommended colorectal screening exams – a Fecal Occult Blood Test, or commonly called an FOBT, a sigmoidoscopy and a colonoscopy. You have to take the prep medication for either the sigmoidoscopy, or the colonoscopy exam. Caller #9, how can I help you?

Caller #9: What is an FOBT?

Expert: FOBT is a test that looks for blood in your stool. You collect stool samples at home and then send them to a lab. This is generally done every year and test results could require further follow-up.

Caller #9(again): What is a sigmoidoscopy (sig-moid-OSS-ko-pee)?

Expert: A *Sigmoidoscopy* (sig-moid-OSS-ko-pee) is usually done every 5 years at a clinic or hospital. A trained health care provider uses a thin flexible, lighted tube to look in your colon. The sigmoidoscopy examines the rectum and the descending colon. In order for the doctor to see the inside of your colon clearly (and get good pictures) it should be as cleaned out as possible. If a polyp is found during a sigmoidoscopy, a colonoscopy will need to be done to check all of the colon. Polyps are not removed during a sigmoidoscopy. Is there another question out there? Last caller?

Caller #10: I'm not sure if I can say this right...What is a *Colonoscopy* (ko-lon-OSS-ko-pee)? So many big words.

Expert: A *Colonoscopy* (ko-lon-OSS-ko-pee) is usually done every 10 years at a clinic or hospital. A colonoscopy examines the rectum and ALL of the colon with a thin flexible tube. A mild sedative is given. During the exam, your health care provider may remove polyps or small pieces of tissue, called a biopsy. A biopsy is then examined under a microscope to look for cancer cells by a specially trained doctor, called a pathologist. A colonoscopy is considered the gold standard of colorectal cancer screening.

Radio Announcer: Well it looks like we are out of time. That ends today's Wellness Ways Talk Show. A big round of applause to all our callers for asking such helpful questions for all of us to learn about colon health. If you have more questions, please talk to your health care provider to learn more about the ways you can take care of your health. Until next time this is Wellness Radio signing off.