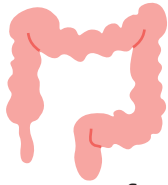


SEVEN THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT COLON CANCER

1

WHAT IS COLON CANCER?



Colon cancer is a type of cancer that grows in the large intestine (colon), the final part of the digestive tract. Colon cancer usually affects older adults but can happen at any age. Colon cancer can also run in families, so if you have family members who have had colon cancer, it is important that you contact your doctor and ask if you should be screened, regardless of your age. While colon cancer is the second ranked cancer killer in the US, it is preventable and treatable - regular screening and early detection are key!

2

HOW DOES IT DEVELOP?



Colon cancer usually starts as a polyp, which is a small growth of tissue that forms on the inside of your colon. Over time, this polyp can continue to grow and turn into colon cancer. A polyp can be seen and removed during a colonoscopy, before it has a chance to grow into colon cancer.

3

WHAT ARE THE RISK FACTORS?



Risk factors include: obesity, bad diet (low fiber/high fat) and lack of exercise; smoking or excessive alcohol use; existing medical conditions such as diabetes, ulcerative colitis, Crohn's disease; family history; and age over 45.

4

CAN IT BE PREVENTED?



A colonoscopy can prevent colon cancer by removing a polyp before it has a chance to grow into cancer. Colon cancer is one of the few cancers that can actually be prevented if you keep up to date with your screenings.

5

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?



Colon cancer often doesn't cause any symptoms until later stages when it is more difficult to treat. This is why it is important to keep up to date with screening, regardless of how you feel. Symptoms of colon cancer may include: blood in your stool; persistent change in bowel habits or appearance of your stool; persistent abdominal discomfort - cramps, gas, pain; a feeling that your bowel doesn't empty completely; weakness or fatigue; or unexplained weight loss. If you have any of these symptoms, it doesn't mean you have colon cancer - but it does mean that you should call your doctor and schedule a screening test. The only way to confirm that you have colon cancer is by getting a colonoscopy. During the colonoscopy, the doctor will take small tissue samples from inside your colon. These will be examined under a microscope to see if cancer cells are present. If cancer is present, your doctor will let you know and discuss next steps.

6

WHAT IS THE SURVIVAL RATE?



Colorectal cancer caught in the early stages has a 5-year survival rate of over 90%. But only 39% of cases are diagnosed in early stages due to low screening rates. When the disease spreads to distant organs, the 5-year survival rate drops to 11%.

7

HOW DO I GET SCREENED? WHAT IS THE COST?



Colon cancer screening is typically FREE of cost with most insurance coverage, starting at age 45. Please contact your provider at Juniper Health to schedule an appointment today.

Breathitt County: (606) 666-9950

Lee County: (606) 464-2401

Morgan County: (606) 743-4808

Wolfe County: (606) 668-7385

Elliott County: (606) 738-9785