

COLORECTAL CANCER

It's one of the more curable cancers

By PAULA VESS
Regional Marketing Group

KINGS MOUNTAIN - Colorectal cancer is the second leading cause of cancer-related death in the United States among cancers that affect both men and women, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

But there is hope. "[Colorectal cancer] is also one form of cancer that can be cured about 80 percent of the time when it is found early," said Austin Osemeka, MD, a gastroenterologist with Kings Mountain Hospital (KMH).

More than 95 percent of colorectal cancers begin in the cells that line the walls of the colon (the large intestine) and rectum (the end of the colon), the American Cancer Society (ACS) reports.

Most of these cancers start as a polyp -- a growth of tissue that forms in the lining and grows into the center of the colon or rectum. The ACS says that most cases of colorectal cancer develop slowly, over many years.

Dr. Osemeka, who often works with the staff in the Endoscopy Department at KMH, stresses that screening is the best way to fight this form of cancer. A simple outpatient procedure like a colonoscopy is the best weapon. A colonoscopy allows a physician to look closely inside the colon using a thin, flexible tube with a tiny video camera for polyps or other signs of cancer. Puffs of air help keep the colon expanded for better visuals. This potentially life-saving exam only takes about 30 minutes with the patient comfortably sedated.

If everyone over the age of 50 has regular screening tests for colorectal cancer, the CDC says that up to 60 percent of deaths from the disease can be prevented.

"Screening is so important because in the early stages, colorectal cancer often has no symptoms," said Dr. Osemeka. "A person who has it may not even know it. Many times, by the time a person has symptoms, the disease has already spread to other parts of the body."

Dealing with polyps or a small cancerous mass today is preferable to dealing with a cancer that has spread throughout the body.

The CDC and the American College of Gastroenterology recommends



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Austin Osemeka, MD, a gastroenterologist at Kings Mountain Hospital, says screening is the best way to fight colorectal cancer. If found early, this kind of cancer can be cured about 80 percent of the time, he said.



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Catherine McKee, RN, prepares to sedate a patient before a procedure.

everyone above the age of 50 have a colorectal cancer screening every 10 years. Some people may need to start earlier or have screenings more often if they have risk factors such as a family history of the disease.

The newly renovated Endoscopy Department at Kings Mountain Hospital is staffed with trained

Symptoms of Colorectal Cancer May Include:

- A CHANGE** in bowel habits, including diarrhea or constipation or a change in the consistency of stool for more than a couple of weeks
- PERSISTENT RECTAL** bleeding or blood in the stool
- PERSISTENT ABDOMINAL** discomfort, such as cramps, gas or pain
- A FEELING THAT** the bowel doesn't empty completely
- WEAKNESS** or fatigue
- UNEXPLAINED** weight loss
- UNEXPLAINED ANEMIA** (having less than normal number of red blood cells)

nurses and offers several colorectal cancer screening options including colonoscopy. "Our overall goal is to provide excellent care to our patients," says Dr. Osemeka.

If you are interested in this life-saving screening procedure, please call the Endoscopy Department at 980-487-5189.

Some factors increase risks of colorectal cancer



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Martha Bell, CNAII and Endoscopy Technologist, and Joann Holland, CNAI and Certified Sterile Processing Technician, show off the scopes - long, thin tubes with tiny cameras attached, used in procedures such as a colonoscopies.

There are factors that may increase a person's chance of getting colorectal cancer. Some of them include:

- Being over the age of 50. More than 9 out of 10 people with colorectal cancer are older than 50.
- A previous case of colorectal cancer. If you have had colorectal cancer, you are more likely to have new cancers start in other areas of your colon and rectum. The chances of this happening are greater if you had your first colorectal cancer when you were younger.
- Inflammatory bowel diseases, like ulcerative colitis and Crohn's disease, increase the risk of colon cancer. (These diseases are different than irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), which does not increase the colorectal cancer risk.)
- Close relatives (parents, brothers/sisters, or children) who have had this cancer. This is especially true if the family member got the cancer at a younger age.
- Certain family syndromes. The 2 most common inherited syndromes linked with colorectal cancers are familial adenomatous polyposis (FAP) and hereditary non-polyposis colorectal cancer (HNPCC).
- Some racial and ethnic groups such as African Americans and Jews of Eastern European descent (Ashkenazi Jews).
- Certain types of diets: A diet that is high in red meats (beef, lamb, or liver) and processed meats (hot dogs, bologna, and lunch meat). Cooking meats at very high heat (frying, broiling, or grilling) can create chemicals that might increase cancer risk. Diets high in vegetables and fruits have been linked with a lower risk of colorectal cancer.
- Lack of exercise: Getting more exercise may help reduce your risk.
- Overweight: Being very overweight increases a person's risk of having and dying from colorectal cancer.
- Smoking: Long-time smokers are more likely than non-smokers to have and die from colorectal cancer.
- Alcohol: Heavy use of alcohol has been linked to colorectal cancer.
- Diabetes: People with type 2 diabetes have an increased chance of getting colorectal cancer.

Source: American Cancer Society

APRIL 2010



HEALTH

Giving you
The Power of

Pink Ribbon Network
April 1
12-1 p.m.
CRMC Oncology Services Board Room
A gathering for newly diagnosed breast cancer patients. Lunch served. To register, please call 980-487-3757

WINGS Cancer Support Group
April 5
6 p.m.
CRMC Blumenthal Cancer Center
A support group for patients with all types of cancer. For more information, please call 980-487-3025.

Healthy Hearts Support Group
April 6
11 a.m.
CRMC Cardiopulmonary Rehab Department
"Changing Behavior - Smoking"
For more information, please call 980-487-3659.

Bridges
April 12 or 26
2-3 p.m.
CRMC Blumenthal Cancer Center
A special educational program to aid recovery during the post-operative period after a mastectomy or lumpectomy. Register two weeks after mastectomy or lumpectomy by calling 980-487-3757.

Diabetes Support Group
April 13
5:30 p.m.
CRMC Auditorium
"Eating Multi-Ethnic Foods: What to Eat" with Lynn Sullens, MS, RD, LDN; Clinical Dietician
For more information, please call 980-487-3953.

Journey's Coffee and Conversation
April 15
Noon
Patrick Senior Center
909 E King Street
Kings Mountain

April 22
Noon
Neal Senior Center
100 T. R. Harris Drive
Shelby
"How Do You Help When Someone is Grieving?"
Practical things to remember when helping someone who is grieving. Contact Pam Isaacs at 704-487-4577 for more information.

Blood Pressure Screening
April 27
11:30 a.m. - 2 p.m.
CRMC Lobby

Some programs may require pre-registration or appointments. Some require a fee. For more information, call 980-487-3903.



Cancer Treatment That's Close to Home

Cleveland Regional Medical Center has been providing state-of-the-art cancer care to patients for more than 30 years. One of the first in the region to be certified by the American College of Surgeons, the Blumenthal Cancer Center at CRMC offers a multidisciplinary approach to cancer treatment and patient care. Specially trained radiation therapists, oncology nurses and others support board-certified medical and radiation oncologists and surgeons. Together, they work with patients and families to provide quality care and excellent service. **For more information call 980-487-3724**

Cleveland Regional Medical Center: 980-487-3000
Kings Mountain Hospital: 980-487-5000
www.ClevelandCountyHealthCareSystem.org



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