

A Colonoscopy CAN Save Your Life

What's **stopping** you?

Why get screened?

Colon cancer is the second leading cause of cancer and cancer-related deaths among men and women in the United States, with 91 percent of new cases occurring in patients 50 or older. But, the good news is, according to the National Cancer Institute, deaths from colorectal cancer are declining due to increased use of screening.

In fact, colorectal cancer is one of the most preventable cancers. Almost always it starts as a non-cancerous growth called a polyp that forms on the lining of the colon and/or rectum. Colonoscopies detect and remove polyps. So if found early enough, the cancer can be prevented before it gets started. Up to 85 percent of colorectal cancers could be prevented if everyone who was eligible for screening actually got screened.

Is it time for you to get yours?

The American College of Gastroenterology recommends colon cancer screenings begin at age 50, or age 45 if you are black, as this group is at higher risk than whites, Hispanics and other ethnic groups.

Everyone has a reason for not getting a colonoscopy. But nothing changes the fact that colon cancer is one of the most preventable cancers. Don't let the following misconceptions stop you from getting screened:



MYTH: "I'm not at risk for colon cancer."

FACT: Everyone is at risk. In fact, 1 in 19 American men and women will get colon cancer.

MYTH: "I don't have any symptoms."

FACT: Most people with colorectal cancer have no symptoms. That's why it's important to have regular colonoscopy screenings. Almost always, colorectal cancer starts as a precancerous growth called a polyp, which doesn't cause symptoms. A colonoscopy detects polyps so they can be removed before they turn into cancer.

MYTH: "I can't drink that gallon of prep stuff."

FACT: Today's bowel prep is much less volume than ever before. Patients can choose half-gallon options and split doses that still allow for proper preparation and a successful colonoscopy.

MYTH: "A colonoscopy isn't accurate."

FACT: Physicians who specialize in performing colonoscopies and who track outcomes improve the odds of having a high-quality read.

MYTH: "It's too painful! Or "I just can't be sedated enough."

FACT: Actually, 99 percent of patients should be able to be adequately sedated through conscious sedation or twilight sleep to be comfortable during their colonoscopies. Most don't even remember the exam! Monitored anesthesia care is also offered for those requiring deeper sedation.

MYTH: "It's too risky. My friend had his colon perforated during a colonoscopy."

FACT: When performed by specially trained professionals, colonoscopies are safe. The risk of perforation is less than 1 in 1,000 cases, and the risk of bleeding is less than 1 percent.

MYTH: "If I get colorectal cancer, then it was meant to be."

FACT: Colon cancer IS preventable. Here's how: Get screened today (colonoscopy is the preferred screening strategy). Change your lifestyle now: eat a healthy diet, maintain a normal weight, exercise and avoid smoking.

TALK TO YOUR DOCTOR ABOUT SCHEDULING YOUR COLONOSCOPY TODAY