

# protect yourself FROM COLON CANCER

Cancers that start in the colon or the rectum are known collectively as colorectal cancer; these cancers originate in the digestive system. According to the American Cancer Society, an estimated 102,900 cases of colon cancer and 39,670 cases of rectal cancer occurred last year in the United States. As a result of early detection and improved treatments, the death rate associated with colorectal cancer has been decreasing since 1995.

## risk factors and prevention

The lifetime risk of developing colorectal cancer is 1 in 19 for men and 1 in 20 for women. Some risk factors for the disease—such as age; race; a personal history of polyps (growths) or colon cancer; and a family history of colon cancer—cannot be changed.

However, other risk factors can be modified. The American Cancer Society states that the links between diet, weight, and exercise and colorectal cancer are some of the strongest for any type of cancer and makes the following recommendations for the prevention of colorectal cancer.

**diet**—Eat plenty of fruits, vegetables, and whole grain foods, and limit intake of high-fat foods. Diets high in red and processed meats can increase risk for colorectal cancer.

**exercise**—Aim for at least 30 minutes of physical activity on at least five days of the week.

**weight**—Maintain a healthy weight throughout life. Being overweight or obese increases risk of colon cancer in both men and women, and the association may be stronger in men.

**smoking**—Quit smoking. People who have smoked for a long period are more likely than non-smokers to both develop and die from colorectal cancer.

**diabetes**—Individuals who have type 2 diabetes are at increased risk of developing colorectal cancer.

**alcohol**—Heavy alcohol use has been linked to colorectal cancer.

## the importance of screening

The good news is that in many cases, regular screening can detect polyps before they become cancer, and the polyps can be removed. Additionally, colorectal cancer screening can help detect cancer in its early stages when a cure is more likely. There are a variety of screening tests;

talk to your physician regarding the best option for you. The American Cancer Society recommends that in general, both men and women at average risk of colorectal cancer should begin screening tests at age 50. Talk to your physician about the optimal time to begin screening based on your personal and family history.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON RISK FACTORS AND PREVENTION OF COLORECTAL CANCER, CONSULT YOUR PHYSICIAN.



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## early detection of colon cancer MAY SAVE YOUR LIFE.

Cancers of the colon and rectum combined—or colorectal cancers—are the third most common site of new cancer cases, excluding skin cancers. The American Cancer Society estimates that 102,900 new cases of colon cancer and 39,670 new cases of rectal cancer occurred last year in the United States. The good news is that many colorectal cancer cases and deaths are considered preventable. For this reason, it is vital that you participate in recommended screenings. Colon cancer may be curable, if detected and treated early.

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO SCHEDULE A COLON CANCER SCREENING, CALL (214) 345-2669.

