Health Awareness

Colon Cancer: A Preventable Cancer

(NAPS)—Perhaps the least understood and most compelling aspect of colon cancer is that it can often be stopped before it even starts. With the nation under a new campaign by the American Cancer Society is raising awareness that this threat to the health of all Americans is a preventable disease that can be attacked before it strikes. The American Cancer Society estimates that 145,290 Americans will be diagnosed with colorectal cancer (commonly referred to as colon cancer) and 56,290 will die of the disease, a number that could be cut in half if Americans followed American Cancer Society testing recommendations for colon cancer.

Many Americans Fail To Get Tested

Despite overwhelming evidence that testing can save lives, many Americans still are not getting tested for colorectal cancer at age 50. Colon cancer is the rarest case where testing can help prevent the disease. Suspicious polyps (precancerous changes or growths) that may precancerous part of increased testing, colon cancer incidence rates decreased about three percent a year between 1998 and 2001. Increased testing and improvements in survival have also led to a lower death rate, which has decreased an average of 1.8 percent per year over the past 15 years.

When colon cancer is caught early, it has a 90 percent 5-year survival rate. Still, fewer than four in 10 (39 percent) of these cancers are discovered at the earliest, most at increased risk, the majority of cases occur in people whose only risk factor is their age, which is why people at average risk should start getting tested at age 50. People with family history of the disease are at greater risk to have a colorectal cancer, which has decreased an average of 1.8 percent per year over the past 15 years.

The American Cancer Society says increasing colon cancer testing among adults 50 and older represents the single greatest opportunity to decrease colorectal cancer death rates in this country (more than 90 percent of cases are diagnosed in people over the age of 50).

"It's becoming clear that people between 50 and older do not see themselves as being at risk for colon cancer and needing to be tested," said Stephen J. Sener, MD, national volunteer president of the American Cancer Society. "If we can increase awareness and compliance to the level we've done with the Pap test and the mammogram, we will have a tremendous opportunity to save thousands of lives through prevention and early detection.

Myths and Misperceptions About Colon Cancer

The reasons for low testing rates include many misconceptions. One common colon cancer myth is that only people with a family history need to be concerned about colon cancer. While it is true that those who have a family history of the disease are at increased risk, the majority of cases occur in people whose only risk factor is their age, which is why people at average risk should start getting tested at age 50. People with family history of the disease cancer death rates in this country (more than 90 percent of cases are diagnosed in people over the age of 50).

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Call All Doctors

The Society also emphasizes the major role doctors play in increasing testing rates. "Physicians are the most important factor in getting patients tested for colon cancer," said Durado Brooks, MD, the Society's director of prostate and colorectal cancer. "If your doctor recommends it, you're more likely to get tested. During most patient visits, doctors have a lot to cover in a short time. But the benefits of colon cancer testing are so great that they need to take the time to emphasize the importance of these tests. The American Cancer Society makes reliable information regarding colon cancer, risk factors, prevention and testing available any time, day or night. For a free information kit to help you talk to your doctor about colon cancer testing, call 1-800-ACS-2345 or visit www.cancer.org for additional information.

Not All Cheese Is Created Equal

(NAPS)—The next time you purchase cheese, stop and think about what you’re actually getting. Are you getting a cheese made with the freshest ingredients or one with a variety of substituents? The fact is, making a quality cheese can be expensive, so some companies choose to reduce costs by adding to or substituting for fresh milk. This may include powders, milk fat, oils and an increased amount of water, all of which can affect taste, texture, and meltability. The best way to be sure of what you’re purchasing is to always check the label and the fine print. American Cheese is a perfect example; while you may think you are buying Pasteurized Process American Cheese, a closer look may reveal you’re actually buying American Cheese Product or Cheese Food, both of which can contain alternatives to fresh ingredients. Bean’s Head, makers of premium delicatessen products, never uses substitutes in its line of 30 cheeses. In fact, many are made by certified Wisconsin Master Cheesemakers, with Vermont Cheddar, Picante Provolone and Mozzarella winning top awards in national and worldwide contests.

THE HOME FRONT

A Modern Twist To Traditional Fencing

(NAPS)—The picket fence has long been an icon of the American dream. Today, the classic design comes with a twist—modern materials that preserve the traditional look without the traditional hassles. For instance, vinyl has taken the fences of the past, offering homeowners decorative options to tailor fences to their individual tastes. Homeowners who want to step away from the standard white picket fence can choose to install a tan fence, for example. They can also top their private or semi-private fence with lattices for enhanced style. Buff-Tech, a popular line of vinyl fencing from MetalTech Corp., offers a variety of colors, as well as lattice, to help homeowners personalize their landscaping.

Similar to the storied wooden picket fence, modern vinyl fencing comes in a variety of heights and styles that provide the allure of old world charm. In fact, homeowners can get the precise look they’re after by mixing straight or concave fencing with different styles to produce a fence to fit their needs. For instance, Buff-Tech offers styles ranging from the traditional Rottibury to the contemporary FlatTop.

The excitement of a new fence or the thrill of replacing an old one, however, can quickly be diminished by splinters, painting and constant upkeep. Vinyl fence...