

## It's Time to Discuss Colorectal Cancer

When was the last time you and your friends discussed colorectal cancer over lunch? Well, maybe that isn't a good time to have that conversation, but when is the right time? Media attention has increased awareness of breast and prostate cancers. However, colorectal cancer hasn't become a water-cooler subject in most offices.

March is National Colon Cancer Awareness Month, and a great time to step out of your comfort zone, and confront fears, embarrassment, and other audacious feelings about one ugly cancer! Don't struggle for an ice-breaker; discuss known risk factors that may make you the next target for this unscrupulous disease:

**Genetics:** Although 85% of colon cancers occur in people with no family history of the disease, a strong genetic predisposition increases the risk for developing colon cancer. Family history is defined as cancer or polyps found in a parent, brother or sister younger than 60, or two relatives of any age. Having this risk makes it even more important to recognize and incorporate healthy lifestyle practices.

**Diet:** A high fat diet, especially one made up of mostly animal fat, can increase the risk of colorectal cancer. Eating a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables and limiting foods high in saturated fat provides protection against colorectal cancer.

**Exercise:** People who are not active have a higher risk of colorectal cancer. Engaging in moderate activity for 30 minutes or more five or more days per week will reduce colorectal cancer risk.

**Healthy weight:** There is increasing evidence that obesity is associated with an increased risk of colorectal cancer. Maintain a healthy weight by combining a nourishing diet with daily exercise.

**Smoking & Alcohol:** Recent studies show that smokers are 30% to 40% more likely than nonsmokers to die of colorectal cancer. Moderate to heavy use of alcohol, four or more drinks per week, has also been linked to colorectal cancer.

**Prevention:** Most cases of colon cancer begin as small, noncancerous cells called polyps. Over time, some of these polyps become colon cancers. Polyps may be small and produce few, if any, symptoms. For this reason, doctors recommend regular screening tests to help prevent colon cancer by identifying polyps before they become colon cancer.

**Screenings:** Regular colon cancer screenings should begin at age 50 for people at average risk of colon cancer. The American College of Gastroenterology recommends African-Americans, who have an increased risk of colon cancer, begin screening at age 45. There are several screening options available at no cost for employees with Polk County School Board (PCSB) insurance through Blue Cross Blue Shield.

The annual fecal occult blood test can be done with a simple test kit through Lakeland Regional Cancer Center mobile screenings. (There are no age restrictions for this self-administered test.) A colonoscopy is also available at no cost for those enrolled in the 3160/3161 and 3566 plans if the procedure is done in an ambulatory surgery center (ASC). For those in the 704 health plan, the annual calendar year deductible is waived and a 20% coinsurance is applicable. Discuss your options with your doctor, and together decide which tests are more appropriate for you.

It is time for everyone to start talking about the third-leading cause of cancer-related deaths in the United States in both men and women. Investigate your family history of this disease, practice age-appropriate screenings, and make positive lifestyle choices to reduce your risks for colorectal cancer. Take the time today to contact the Wellness Team at 648-3057 for a personalized plan to reduce your risk of colon cancer.

Source: Mayo Clinic

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## Fiber for Colon Health

These days there is a lot of attention paid to heart disease and diabetes, but the importance of having a healthy colon (large intestine) should not be ignored. Colon cancer is the third most common cancer diagnosed in both men and women. Diverticulitis, a condition where pouches form along the digestive tract and become infected, affects 50% of Americans age 60 and over. General constipation, irritable bowel syndrome, and colitis are other examples of colon disorders.



Fiber is key to preventing diseases and disorders relating to the colon. The recommended amount of fiber each day for adults is between 25-30 grams a day. Most Americans fall short, only consuming about 15 grams a day. Beans, fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and nuts are typically good sources of fiber. Certain cereals like Fiber One have 14 grams of fiber per serving (and only 60 calories)! Fiber also provides benefits with regard to weight management—it helps create a feeling

of being full without additional calories. Eating yogurt with probiotics and drinking plenty of water are additional strategies for obtaining a healthy colon. Start giving more attention to your colorectal health today! Eat a rainbow of colorful fruits and vegetables for your colorectal health.

## Still Too Much Sodium?

The Dietary Guidelines recommend no more than 2,300 milligrams of sodium, about 1 teaspoon of salt, for most people. About  $\frac{2}{3}$  of a teaspoon of salt or 1,500 milligrams, is recommended for people over age 51, African-Americans, and those with a history of high blood pressure, kidney problems or diabetes. A teaspoon of salt equals about 2300 milligrams. Most of the sodium we consume is already in the foods we eat. Restaurant and processed foods contain high amounts. Even these basic foods contain sodium:

- 1 oz. sliced cheese: 200mg
- 1/2 c. canned corn or beans: 300mg
- 1 c. soup: 700-1000mg
- 2 oz. low sodium turkey deli meat: 440mg
- 1 large slice cheese pizza: 800mg
- V8 (11.5oz can): 600mg
- 1/2 c. jarred pasta sauce: 300mg
- Plain bagel w/2 Tbsp cream cheese: 670mg
- 2 Tbsp salad dressings: 400mg

Try to select reduced sodium and low sodium products. Soups and broths are a good place to start. However, keep in mind that the term “reduced sodium” refers to only a 25% reduction. This is not the same as low sodium (140mg or less of sodium). Focus on foods that are naturally low in sodium such as fresh fruits and vegetables; fresh lean meats, poultry and fish; dry and fresh beans and peas, unsalted nuts, and eggs.

If you would like more information on the Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (D.A.S.H.) Diet, contact Allison Sullins, RD, LD/N at 648-3057.

## e-Cigarettes: A Safer Alternative to Smoking?

Is an electronic cigarette the answer to quitting smoking, or just another vice? This battery powered apparatus resembles an actual cigarette and provides the user with an inhaled dose of vaporized nicotine. Proponents suggest that e-cigarette are a safe alternative to smoking, as they do not contain the carcinogens and other chemicals found in traditional cigarettes. Additionally, since there is no combustion with an e-cigarette, there is no secondhand smoke. These characteristics have made e-cigarettes appealing to those who have difficulty refraining from smoking in public places, and those who are trying to break the habit.

So does that mean that all smokers should be encouraged to run out and purchase an e-cigarette? Probably not. As they are new to the U.S. market (2006), clinical studies are still underway. The FDA and several anti-smoking groups have called for a ban on the sale of e-cigarettes, citing the yet unknown dangers and the potential for addicting children, who are not yet smokers, to tobacco products.

This is not to say, however, that e-cigarettes do not have potential. In December, Boston University School of Public Health released findings concluding that “...electronic cigarettes are much safer than real cigarettes and show promise in the fight against tobacco-related diseases and death.” Researchers could not say the e-cigarettes were absolutely “safe,” but noted that they were much safer than cigarettes with toxicity levels comparable to nicotine replacement products like the patch, gum and lozenge.

Whichever method you choose, just know that quitting tobacco is the single best thing you can do for your health. For more information, visit [www.polk-fl.net](http://www.polk-fl.net) (keyword: wellness) or call 648-3057 and talk with one of the Wellness Team Tobacco Treatment Specialists.



# Eat Right With Color

Every March, National Nutrition Month features a theme encouraging healthy eating. This year, the American Dietetic Association encourages everyone to add color and nutrients to your meals through this year's theme, "Eat Right with Color." In conjunction, the recently released 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend an increased focus on a plant-based diet. Eating more fruits and vegetables, and including lean meats, fish and poultry, and low-fat dairy products creates a rainbow of colors on the plate that serve as the foundation for a healthful eating plan. Food variety supplies different nutrients, so to maximize the nutritional value of your meal, include healthful choices in a variety of colors. Brighten up your plate with this quick color guide:

Green produce indicates antioxidant potential and may help promote healthy vision and reduce cancer risks.

- \* **Fruits:** avocado, apples, grapes, honeydew, kiwi and lime
- \* **Vegetables:** artichoke, asparagus, broccoli, green beans, green peppers and leafy greens such as spinach

Orange and deep yellow fruits and vegetables contain nutrients that promote healthy vision and immunity, and reduce the risk of some cancers.

- \***Fruits:** apricot, cantaloupe, grapefruit, mango, papaya, peach and pineapple
- \***Vegetables:** carrots, yellow pepper, yellow corn and sweet potatoes

Purple and blue options may have antioxidant and anti-aging benefits and may help with memory, urinary tract health and reduced cancer risks.

- \***Fruits:** blackberries, blueberries, plums, raisins
- \***Vegetables:** eggplant, purple cabbage, purple-fleshed potato

Red indicates produce that may help maintain a healthy heart, vision, immunity and may reduce cancer risks.

- \***Fruits:** cherries, cranberries, pomegranate, red/pink grape fruit, red grapes and watermelon
- \***Vegetables:** beets, red onions, red peppers, red potatoes, rhubarb and tomatoes

White, tan and brown foods sometimes contain nutrients that may promote heart health and reduce cancer risks.

- \***Fruits:** banana, brown pear, dates and white peaches
- \***Vegetables:** cauliflower, mushrooms, onions, parsnips, turnips, white-fleshed potato and white corn



## Coupon Saving Classes

*Learn how to save 50-70% off your grocery bill! Call 648-3057 to register.*

March 24: Lakeland Senior High Media Center  
 April 14: Denison Middle Media Center  
 Time: 4:30 to 5:30 PM

**Thanks to  
 Everyone who  
 made the  
 February 26th  
 Health Fair a  
 TREMENDOUS  
 Success!**

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# ABCs of Diabetes

The *ABCs of Diabetes* is a proactive course through the Wellness Program that provides educations, screenings, and discounts for diabetes supplies and prescriptions. Here are a few of the benefits ABCs of Diabetes participants enjoy:

### Benefits:

- Free eye and foot exams
- Free lipid, HbA1c, kidney function, and blood pressure screenings—two times each year
- Free glucose monitor

### Reduced Rx Copayments:

- Generic tier copay \$4\* retail or mail order
  - Preferred tier copay \$37.50\* mail order
  - Non-preferred tier copay \$62.50\* mail order
- \*90-day supply

**Save \$600 per year!**

### Education/Winter Haven:

- Medical Issues in Diabetes 04/07/11
- Nutrition & Exercise 04/14/11
- Advanced Diet Planning 04/21/11
- Hypertension & Heart Disease 04/28/11

Classes will be held in the main building of the Mark Wilcox Center, 611 Post Avenue SW, Winter Haven 33880. All classes start at 4:30 PM, and registration is required.

### Diabetes Screening:

The next diabetes screening will be held May 21, 2011 at Phillips, Salomon & Parrish, 4337 South Florida Avenue, Lakeland. Appointments are required.

Please email [allison.sullins@polk-fl.net](mailto:allison.sullins@polk-fl.net) or call Allison Sullins, RD, LD/N at 648-3057 for more information or to schedule a diabetes screening appointment.

## Patient Safety

March 6-12, 2011 is designated as National Patient Safety Awareness week to highlight the importance of health care safety. An Institute of Medicine report estimated that between 44,000-98,000 people die in U.S. hospitals each year as a result of lapses in patient safety. To address the problem, several government agencies, including the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the American Hospital Association and the American Medical Association have come up with the following simple suggestions to prevent medical errors.

- \* Ask questions if you have doubts or concerns and make sure you understand the answers.
- \* Keep and bring a list of ALL the medicines you take including non-prescription medicines. Ask about side effects and what to avoid while taking the medicine. Read the label when you get your medicine, including all warnings. Make sure your medicine is what the doctor ordered and know how to use it.
- \* Get the results of any test or procedure. Don't assume the results are fine if you do not get them when expected. Ask what the results mean for your care.
- \* Talk to your doctor about which hospital is best for your health needs if you have more than one hospital to choose from.
- \* Make sure you understand what will happen if you need surgery. Ask your surgeon what they will be doing, how long it will take and what will happen afterwards.



To learn more about medical self care, contact the Wellness Team at 648-3057. For additional tips, visit [www.ahrq.gov](http://www.ahrq.gov).

## Cancer Screenings Can SAVE Your Life!

On-site cancer and osteoporosis screenings are provided to you by the Polk County School Board (PCSB) Wellness Program in conjunction with Lakeland Regional Cancer Center (LRCC). This **FREE** benefit is available to all employees who have PCSB Blue Cross/Blue Shield health insurance. For an appointment, please contact the Cancer Screening Coordinator at each location at least two weeks prior to the screening date. There are no age restrictions for cancer and osteoporosis screenings on the LRCC screening bus.

<b>March</b>	3/29	LAKE ALFRED-ADDAIR MID	4/8	COMBEE EL
3/7-8	3/30	PINEWOOD EL	4/26	PALMETTO EL
3/9-10	3/31	UNION ACAD	4/27	BRIGHAM ACAD
3/11	<b>April</b>		4/28	GIBBONS STREET EL
3/21	4/1	SE ESE OFFICE	4/29	RIDGE CAREER CTR
3/22-23	4/4	DORIS SANDERS		
3/24	4/5	EAST AERA ADULT		
3/25	4/6	KATHLEEN EL		
3/28	4/7	CARLTON PALMORE EL		

**Get On The Bus!**