

Live Healthy Georgia – Seniors Taking Charge!

March 2007 Newsletter

March Is National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month!

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Colorectal cancer is the second leading cause of cancer-related deaths in the U.S. according to the American Cancer Society, yet it is highly preventable. As with many cancers, early detection is key, along with healthy lifestyle habits. Here are some answers to questions you may have about colorectal cancer.

Who is at risk for colorectal cancer?

To start, age alone is a risk factor, with those over age 50 being at greater risk. Other factors that can increase risk include:

1. Physical inactivity
2. Family history of polyps or colorectal cancer
3. Being overweight
4. Smoking or heavy alcohol consumption
5. High-fat diet

How important is regular screening?

Even in the absence of symptoms, it is important to get screened for

colorectal cancer. Some of the screening tests used include a stool blood test, flexible sigmoidoscopy, and colonoscopy. These tests can detect colorectal cancer in its early stages and can be important to cancer prevention. Medicare covers many of these tests. Work with your health care provider to determine the type of screening you need and how often.

What are the signs and symptoms of colorectal cancer?



In its early stages, there are often no symptoms apparent. If symptoms do appear, you will likely need further testing by your health care provider. Symptoms may include (although these could also indicate problems not related to cancer):

1. Change in bowel habits (i.e., diarrhea, constipation, narrowing of the stool, feeling that bowel does not completely empty)
2. Rectal bleeding or blood in stool
3. Cramping or steady stomach pain
4. Weakness or tiredness

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What steps can you take to reduce your risk of colorectal cancer?

As with many chronic diseases, eating a healthy diet that includes plenty of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, and limits high-fat foods is recommended. Staying physically active on a regular basis is also one of the cornerstones of a healthy lifestyle. Try to get at least 30 minutes of moderate activity on most days. Diet and exercise can also help you achieve a healthy body weight. Regular screening is crucial to help prevent colorectal cancer and to detect and remove potentially precancerous lesions. Limiting alcohol consumption and being smoke free are also important.



For more information, see:

The American Cancer Society at:
http://www.cancer.org/docroot/CRI/CRRI_2x.asp?sitearea=&dt=10

The Cancer Research and Prevention Foundation at:
<http://www.preventcancer.org/colorectal/facts/>

Recipe: Maple-Glazed Sweet Potato Oven Fries

Yield: 2 servings

Ingredients:

- 1 large sweet potato, peeled & cut into 2" long wedges
- 2 tsp olive oil
- 1/8 tsp salt
- 1/8 tsp black pepper
- 1/4 cup sugar-free maple syrup
- 1/8 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1/4 tsp vanilla extract



Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 450°F and line a small baking pan with non-stick aluminum foil.
2. Mix together potato wedges, oil, salt, and pepper in a bowl to coat potatoes evenly; place potatoes onto the foil-lined baking pan.
3. Bake potatoes 20-25 minutes until tender and starting to turn light brown, flipping once halfway through cooking time.
4. Just before potatoes are finished, mix together the maple syrup, cinnamon, and vanilla in a small bowl and microwave 10-15 seconds.
5. Remove potatoes from oven and drizzle with the maple glaze.