



# Spotlight

*Cancer news and information from the Cancer Care Center of York County*



## Combatting Colon Cancer

Just a decade or two ago, a colon cancer diagnosis was grim news. But thanks to advances in early detection and treatment, the prognosis today is much more favorable.

“No one looks forward to a colonoscopy, but the truth is that it has saved thousands of lives,” states Jeffrey Young, Radiation Oncologist at the Cancer Care Center of York County. “As with other cancers, it’s so much better if we can catch the disease before it spreads.”

**Everyone over 50 should be screened for colorectal cancer.**

You may need to be tested earlier or more often if you have inflammatory bowel disease or a close relative who had colorectal polyps or cancer. And for now, the “gold standard” diagnostic test is a colonoscopy, in which a doctor examines the lining of your rectum and entire colon using a thin, flexible, lighted tube called a colonoscope.

### ***Mark Your Calendar!***

**Cancer Care Center of York County  
Tuesday March 4; 6-8 PM**

Join our Medical Oncologist Patricia Deisler, MD, cancer surgeon Catherine O’Connor, MD and Suzanne Laliberte RN to learn about colorectal cancer:

- risk factors
- methods of detection
- improved treatment options
- research news



**CancerCare**  
Center of York County

*(Combating Colon Cancer continued)*

“Sigmoidoscopy, another widely used screening procedure, only reaches the lowest part of the colon and rectum; it does not reach the section of the colon where many cancers occur,” says Radiation Oncologist Jeffrey Young, MD.

There are promising new diagnostic options being developed – including MRI scanning and the “virtual” colonoscopy (which uses advanced CT scan software to detail the colon lining) – but those testing alternatives are not yet widely accepted in the US. Dr. Young explains, “These tests are merely diagnostic – not therapeutic. If something is found, the patient must have another procedure (and another prep). If something is found during a standard colonoscopy or sigmoidoscopy, it can be removed on the spot.”



***Our doctors agree:  
If you're 50 years old, or  
at increased risk, you  
should be screened  
regularly.***

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### **Treating Colon Cancer is a Team Effort**

At the Cancer Care Center, our oncologists work closely with the patient's primary care physician, gastroenterologist and surgeon to create an optimal plan of care. The treatment plan depends on the stage of the cancer – as well as the patient's overall health status.

Surgical removal of cancer remains an integral part of the treatment strategy for patients with stage II colon cancer and many patients are cured with this treatment alone. A clinical trial has shown that a less invasive surgical technique, called laparoscopic surgery, can be as effective as conventional surgery.

### **Radiation and Chemotherapy Advances**

Radiation and chemotherapy treatments are often used before

### ***Exceptional Care. Local Comfort.***

The Cancer Care Center of York County provides state-of-the-art medical oncology and radiation treatment in a beautiful new facility equipped with the most advanced technologies. A collaboration of Goodall Hospital, Maine Medical Center and Southern Maine Medical Center, the Center is staffed by oncologists from Spectrum Medical Group and the Maine Center for Cancer Medicine.



surgery to shrink tumors and reduce the need for more radical surgery,” explains Radiation Oncologist Jeffrey Young. “After surgery, combination therapies are often used to prevent the cancer from recurring.”

“Several new chemotherapy and biological drugs show great promise,” says Patricia Deisler, MD. “Eloxatin® and Xeloda® have been recently approved for the treatment of stage III colon cancer and may provide benefit in the treatment of stage II disease. We’re also working with ‘targeted’ therapies, including Avastin® (bevacizumab), which slows or prevents the growth of new blood vessels and Erbitux® (IMC-225), which appears to increase the anti-cancer activity of other chemotherapy agents.”

**Visit the information library at the Cancer Care Center of York County to learn about the latest colorectal cancer research and treatment options. Call 207-459-1600 or visit us online at [www.cancercareyorkcounty.org](http://www.cancercareyorkcounty.org)**

## Are You at Risk?

Every one of us is at risk for colorectal cancer. It’s the 2nd most common cancer, with about 150,000 Americans diagnosed each year. The majority of people who develop colorectal cancer have no known risk factors.

### Factors That Increase Your Risk:

- **Age:** over 50
- **Gender:** Women have a higher risk of colon cancer, men have a higher risk for rectal cancer
- **Polyps:** non-cancerous growths in the colon or rectum
- **Personal history:** inflammatory bowel disease, other cancers
- **Family history:** a close relative with colorectal cancer
- **Lifestyle factors:** Smoking, drinking, consumption of processed meat, overweight, not enough exercise

### Symptoms:

Colorectal cancer in its early stages usually does not cause any symptoms – which is why routine screening is so important. Never ignore blood in the stool, a common symptom of colon cancer (as well as other conditions). Talk to your doctor.

*My new cancer treatment is really working.*

“Since 2002, I’ve been treated for multiple myeloma, a treatable but incurable cancer of the bone marrow. I was in very tough shape when I transferred to the Cancer Care Center in 2006 — but I now feel better than I have in years. **My oncologist here keeps up with all the latest research, and consults regularly with my other doctors.**”

– Richard, *Springvale, Maine*



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