

## LOCAL EXPERT OFFERS ADVICE TO CONSUMERS DURING COLORECTAL CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

### *Early Screening Essential to Prevention and Increasing Cure Rate*

**[ADD MONTH DAY, YEAR]** - **[ADD LOCAL CITY NAME]** - March is Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month and colorectal cancer expert **[ADD FULL NAME]**, MD, a colorectal surgeon at **[ADD INSTITUTIONAL AFFILIATION]**, is speaking out with advice for consumers on this potentially life-threatening disease.

"Colorectal cancer is the second leading cause of cancer deaths in the United States, with over 56,000 people expected to die from this disease each year," Dr. **[ADD LAST NAME]** explains. "However, it is a preventable and very curable disease if caught early."

Because there are often no symptoms when it is first developing, colorectal cancer can only be caught early through regular screening. "The benefits of early detection and treatment are dramatic," Dr. **[ADD LAST NAME]** says. "The possibility of curing patients after symptoms develop is only 50%, but if colorectal cancer is found and treated at an early stage before symptoms develop, the opportunity to cure it is 80% or better."

"Most colon cancers start as non-cancerous growths called polyps. If we are able to find these polyps while they are still non-cancerous, we remove them and the cancer may be prevented. Major surgery can usually be avoided, as well," Dr. **[ADD LAST NAME]** adds.

Colorectal surgeons are experts in the surgical and nonsurgical treatment of colon and rectal problems and play an instrumental role in the effective screening, prevention and treatment of colorectal cancer. Studies have shown that patients treated by colorectal surgeons are more likely to survive colorectal cancer because of their advanced training and the large number of colon and rectal disease surgeries they perform.

### ASCRS Screening Guidelines

The American Society of Colon and Rectal Surgeons (ASCRS), which is dedicated to advancing the treatment of patients with diseases affecting the colon, rectum and anus, offers the following colorectal cancer screening guidelines:

- For people at average risk of getting colorectal cancer, a digital rectal examination and fecal occult blood test, which screens for hidden blood in the stool, are recommended annually beginning at age 40. Flexible sigmoidoscopy (a test that allows the physician to look directly at the lining of the lower colon and rectum) is recommended every 5 years at age 50 or older. A colonoscopy (a test that allows the physician to look directly at the lining of the entire colon and rectum) every 10 years or a barium enema (x-ray of the colon) every 5 to 10 years are acceptable alternatives.

- People at increased risk for colorectal cancer include those with a personal or family history of colorectal polyps or cancer, those with a personal history of breast, uterine or ovarian cancer, and those with chronic ulcerative colitis or Crohn's disease. They should be screened at an earlier and more frequent rate and should see their colorectal surgeon or other healthcare provider for specific recommendations.

#### Prevention Tips

Dr. **[ADD LAST NAME]** notes that in addition to getting screened regularly for colorectal cancer, people can lower their risk of getting the disease by:

- Avoiding foods that are high in fat.
- Eating plenty of vegetables, fruits and other high-fiber foods.
- Exercising regularly and maintaining a normal body weight.
- Not smoking and drinking alcohol only in moderation.

For more information on colorectal cancer screening, prevention and treatment, call Dr. **[ADD LAST NAME]** at **[AT PHONE NUMBER]** or visit the ASCRS web site at <http://www.fascrs.org/>.