6 FACTS about colorectal cancer screening

1. Colorectal cancer almost always develops from polyps that are abnormal or precancerous. Screening for colorectal cancer can save lives by detecting most of these abnormal polyps so they can be removed before becoming cancer.

2. There are several colorectal screening tests. Talk to your doctor to determine the most appropriate screening test for you, based on your health and family history.

3. Colorectal cancer represents 8% of all new cancer cases and is the second leading cause of cancer deaths in the United States. It is recommended for men and women to begin screening at age 45 (unless earlier screening is recommended by your healthcare provider).

4. You may need to start screening before age 45 if you have a higher risk for colorectal cancer. Examples of these risks include a family history of colorectal cancer, colorectal polyps, personal history of inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) or a genetic syndrome such as familial adenomatous polyposis, or Lynch syndrome.

5. If you develop any symptoms, such as blood in your stool, constipation, change in character of your stool, unexplained weight loss, or abdominal cramps and pains that don't go away, schedule an appointment with your doctor.

6. Share your personal health history and family health history with your doctor to ensure appropriate testing. The 5-year survival rate is 90% when colorectal cancer is caught at an early stage.

Being proactive can save your life so talk to your doctor today about colorectal cancer screening!

This health alert is brought to you by:

TPA THE PHYSICIAN ALLIANCE

Source: ChoosingWisely.org; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; American Cancer Society; U.S. Preventive Services Task Force

These items are provided solely for informational purposes and are not intended as a substitute for consultation with a medical professional. Patients with any specific questions about the items on this list or their individual health should consult their physician.