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Colon Cancer Screening / Colonoscopy

What is screening, and why is it important?

Screening is checking for health problems before they cause symptoms. Colorectal cancer screening can detect cancer, polyps, and other conditions. If colorectal cancer screening reveals a problem, diagnosis and treatment can occur promptly. In addition, finding and removing polyps or other areas of abnormal cell growth may be one of the most effective ways to prevent colorectal cancer development.

Colorectal cancer is both preventable and curable!

Anyone can get colorectal cancer. Colorectal cancer is prevented by removing precancerous colon polyps. It is cured if it is found early and is surgically removed before it spreads to other parts of the body. Since most colon polyps and early cancers are silent (produce no symptoms), it is important to do screening and surveillance for colon cancer in patients without symptoms or signs of the polyps or cancers.

What is the best colon cancer screening test?

Colonoscopy is the **only** method that has a high sensitivity for all polyps -- small and large -- and that can remove them during the procedure.

What is colonoscopy?

Colonoscopy is a procedure used to see inside the colon and rectum. Colonoscopy can detect inflamed tissue, ulcers, and abnormal growths. The procedure is used to look for early signs of colorectal cancer and can help doctors diagnose unexplained changes in bowel habits, abdominal pain, bleeding from the rectum, and weight loss.

At what age should routine colonoscopy begin?

Routine colonoscopy to look for early signs of cancer should begin at age 50 for most people—earlier if there is a family history of colorectal cancer, a personal history of inflammatory bowel disease, or other risk factors. Your doctor can advise patients about how often to get a colonoscopy.

Finding the right physician:

If you would like to schedule a screening, we are happy to refer you to **Dr Stephen Manale** at St Elizabeth's **(Ph 225-743-2455)**.

If you currently have a physician that can perform the colonoscopy, please contact their office to set up a screening.