

## **COLON CANCER**

March was colon cancer awareness month. This article will address this subject. Familiarity with colon cancer warning signs can and does save lives. It is one of the leading causes of cancer related deaths in the USA. Colon Cancer is preventable if caught early, so become familiar with some of the warning signs.

Screening for colon cancer isn't usually recommended until age 50, but if there is a family history of this kind of cancer, or you are presented with warning signs, you can receive a screening at an earlier age.

Some early symptoms of colon cancer could include black tarry stools, abdominal pain and tenderness in the lower abdomen, diarrhea, constipation or other changes in bowel habits, narrow stools, unexplained anemia, rectal bleeding, unexplained weight loss, persistent nausea and vomiting.

Prevention of this disease includes a healthy diet consisting of plenty of fiber, fresh fruits and vegetables, avoid fatty foods, large amounts of red meat and excessive alcohol consumption, and maintain a healthy weight and regular exercise.

Symptoms should always be evaluated by your medical provider. Colon screening is usually by colonoscopy. A gastroenterologist can, through this study, physically see the tissue of the intestine and can remove or biopsy any abnormal cells. Stay tuned to the rhythms of your body and don't ignore unusual changes.

*-Marie Blanchard, RN FCN*