

# Healthy Habits

## Tips for reaching and maintaining your optimum state of health

### March is National Colorectal Awareness Month

Colorectal cancer is cancer of the colon and/or rectum. Equally common in men and women, there were 153,760 cases estimated to be diagnosed in 2007 and roughly one-third of that number were projected to die of the illness. However, it remains one of the most easily prevented cancers because the polyps from which it develops can be removed *before* they become cancerous.

#### Why aren't more cases prevented?

One reason may be the fact that symptoms are rare in the early stages of colorectal cancer. Screening tests have proven very effective. A larger problem is the fact that many find themselves simply too embarrassed to discuss colorectal cancer with friends, family, or even health care providers. Many choose to remain in the dark on preventive measures. Others put stock in myths and misconceptions instead of getting the straight facts from a trusted resource. Unfortunately, in this case, what you don't know can kill you.

#### Be Aware

Learning about colorectal cancer is possible within the privacy of your own home through newspapers, books, and Web sites such as [www.preventcancer.org](http://www.preventcancer.org). All men and women age 50 and older should be screened as well as people with a personal or family history of colorectal cancer, polyps, Crohn's disease or ulcerative colitis.

Obtain information about risk factors, how hereditary is involved, who should receive screenings and what type of screenings are available. By doing these things, you will have conquered the crucial first step: understanding and talking about colorectal cancer.



To learn more about preventive health guidelines, programs and screenings, visit [www.optimahealth.com](http://www.optimahealth.com)

#### Take Action

Knowledge is power but it's not enough. Regular screenings can identify colorectal polyps, growths that can be removed before they ever even become cancerous. Scientific evidence also shows regular exercise and maintaining a healthy weight with a diet high in fruits, vegetables and whole grains may significantly reduce your risk. Avoid all tobacco products and if you consume alcohol; always do so in moderation. Not only will you decrease your risk factors for cancer but it will help you increase the quality and *quantity* of your life.

Researchers believe up to ninety percent of colorectal cancer cases could be eliminated yearly but it starts with you and the choices you make everyday regarding your own health and awareness including regular health and preventive screenings.

You have the power to prevent colorectal cancer. Don't sit on a potential timebomb.

*The material contained in Healthy Habits is not intended to be medical advice on any particular matter. Readers should seek appropriate professional advice before acting on the basis of any information contained in this publication. This information is provided courtesy of Optima Health.*