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**Important Steps That Can Lower Your Risk Of Colorectal Cancer**

By News Canada

**Important Steps That Can Lower Your Risk Of Colorectal Cancer**

by: News Canada

(NC)—March marks National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month, and Barry Stein, President of the Colorectal Cancer Association of Canada and a colon cancer survivor, wants Canadians to know that the goal of the campaign is to generate widespread awareness about this disease and to encourage people to learn more about how to reduce their risk of the disease through regular screening and by leading a healthy lifestyle.

"Few Canadians know that regular screening can help prevent colorectal cancer by detecting pre-cancerous polyps," says Barry Stein. "Our suffering and burden from colorectal cancer in this country is among the highest in the world. Screening is also critical to detect the disease in its earliest, most curable stages and several research studies show that colorectal cancer death rates could be reduced by between 15 and 33 percent if screening takes place," Barry adds.

In 2002, the Canadian Cancer Society estimated that about 6,600 Canadians would die from colorectal cancer making it the second leading cause of death from cancer in this country. Based on these numbers, screening could mean that between 990 (15 percent) and 1,980 (33 percent) of these deaths could be prevented.

To lower your risk, there are five important steps that you should take, including:

Getting regular colorectal cancer screening tests every two years after the age of 50. If there is a personal or family history of the disease, colorectal polyps, inflammatory bowel disease, or breast, ovarian or endometrial cancer then you should talk to your doctor about earlier screening tests;

Eating a low-fat diet high in vegetables, fruits, whole grains and legumes (beans, lentils, nuts);

Exercising 20 minutes, three to four days a week (moderate walking, gardening or climbing stairs all can help to reduce your risk);

## Important Steps That Can Lower Your Risk Of Colorectal Cancer

Drinking in moderation or not at all; and

No smoking.

If you have been diagnosed with colorectal cancer, you need to know that there are various treatments available such as surgery and radiation (in the earlier stages of the disease). In the later stages of the disease, chemotherapy options such as Camptosar®, Xeloda® or 5-fluorouracil (5-FU) are usually used to fight the cancer when it has spread to other areas of the body. Talk to your team of health care providers about the right treatment regimen for you. In addition, there are support groups set up by the Colorectal Cancer Association of Canada that can help you and your family learn more about the disease and cope with the various feelings and emotions you may experience following your diagnosis.

For more information on colorectal cancer or other treatment options available outside of Canada, visit the Colorectal Cancer Association of Canada web site at [www.ccac-accc.ca](http://www.ccac-accc.ca) or call toll free at 1-888-318-9442. You can also call the Canadian Cancer Society toll free at 1-888-939-3333 or The National Colorectal Cancer Campaign at 905-731-2035, or visit their web sites at [www.cancer.ca](http://www.cancer.ca) or

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### **Fact Or Fiction – The Truth About Colorectal Cancer**

#### **By News Canada**

Colorectal Cancer is a disease that only affects older men.

**FICTION:** It can affect anyone, men or women equally. Men and women 50 years or older are at greater risk for the disease.

## Important Steps That Can Lower Your Risk Of Colorectal Cancer

Colorectal Cancer is usually curable.

**FACT:** It is usually curable when detected early. More than 90 percent of patients with localized cancer confirmed to the colon or rectum are alive five years after initial diagnosis.

Getting tested is necessary for individuals who have symptoms.

**FACT:** Men and women age 50 or older should get screened regularly for colorectal cancer. Unfortunately, symptoms for this disease are often silent and therefore it is important to get screened regularly even if you have no symptoms. About 75 percent of all new cases of colorectal cancer occur in individuals with no known risk factors for the disease.

I cannot do anything about being diagnosed with colorectal cancer.

**FICTION:** Colorectal cancer is highly preventable. Some preventative measures include eating a diet rich in fruits and vegetables and low in fat, regular exercise, moderate alcohol consumption, and no smoking. In addition, it is extremely important to get screened for colorectal cancer after the age of 50. Screening can help to identify colorectal cancer in its early stages or before it even begins.

There really are no treatment options for colorectal cancer.

**FICTION:** Treatment will depend on the type, grade and stage of the cancer. Management of the disease may include surgery and radiation in the earlier stages of the disease, and chemotherapy options such as Camptosar®, Xeloda® or 5-fluorouracil (5-FU) are generally used in the later stages of the disease when the cancer has spread to other areas of the body.

No two individuals respond the same to therapy, but there is evidence to demonstrate that one or all of these treatment options can effectively aid people living with colorectal cancer.

I can have a good quality of life if diagnosed with colorectal cancer.

**FACT:** Many people diagnosed with colorectal cancer can have a good quality of life. There are effective treatment options, support groups, and supportive care to help cancer patients cope with the side effects of treatment, as well as the emotional and everyday concerns of living with this disease.

For more information on colorectal cancer, contact the Canadian Cancer Society toll free at

1-888-939-3333 or visit the web site at [www.cancer.ca](http://www.cancer.ca). Other excellent resources include the Colorectal Cancer Association of Canada web site at [www.ccac-acc.ca](http://www.ccac-acc.ca) or The National Colorectal Cancer Campaign at

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