

NEWS RELEASE



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For Immediate Release

COLON CANCER IS LARGELY PREVENTABLE

March is Colon Cancer Awareness Month

ROANOKE RAPIDS, NC. (March 1, 2011)—Colon cancer is preventable, treatable and beatable, according to Rory V. O’Connor, MD, a board certified gastroenterologist who reminds the community that March is National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month.

Colorectal or colon cancer is the third most commonly diagnosed cancer and the third most common cause of cancer death in the United States. More than 145,000 Americans are diagnosed with colorectal cancer each year and approximately 50,000 die.

Fortunately, the disease is largely preventable with regular screening and early detection, says Dr. O’Connor.

If you are over 50 or have a family history of colorectal cancer, talk with your doctor about getting screened or call Eastern Carolina Gastroenterology at 252 535-1800.

The early symptoms of colon cancer can be associated with blood in your stools, narrower than normal stools, unexplained abdominal pain, unexplained change in bowel habits, unexplained weight loss.

“It also is important to remember that colon cancer may not be associated with any symptoms, which is why early detection through screening is so important,” said Dr. O’Connor.

Colorectal cancers develop from precancerous polyps (abnormal growths) in the colon or rectum. Screening tests can find polyps, which can be removed before they turn into cancer. Screening tests also can find colorectal cancer early, when treatment works best and when the chance is high for a full recovery, said Dr. O’Connor.

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

is an examination of the large intestines and rectum, using an instrument called a colonoscope which has a small camera attached to the end.

Colonoscopies and other screenings are performed in the Digestive Health Center at Halifax Regional.

For more information, visit www.halifaxdigestivehealth.com or call Eastern Carolina Gastroenterology at 252 535-1800.

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About Halifax Regional

Halifax Regional Medical Center is licensed for 204 beds, including psychiatric and nursery. A non-profit organization, Halifax Regional is fully accredited by the Joint Commission. For more information, visit www.halifaxregional.org.