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<https://youtu.be/4w42Zj7BQeU>

## Why is Colon Cancer so common today?

Transcript:

“Dr. Jeffery Nelson, Surgical Director for the Center for Inflammatory Bowel and Colorectal Diseases at Mercy Medical Center in Baltimore, commented that the incidence of Colorectal; cancer is rising among younger people for a long time.”

Colon is the larger part of the terminal gut, lying at the back of the abdominal cavity, ending up in the rectum, deep in the pelvic cavity.

Cancer of this part of the gut seems to be increasing and it is the third leading cause of death from Cancer in the US.

It is more common among men than women. The incidence of death above 55 years and older from cancer of the large bowel seems to be decreasing slightly, but in adults younger than 55 years, there has been a small increase in the number of new cases and deaths from colorectal cancer in the recent years.

In Sri Lanka, the incidence is high and a third of cancers occur in those under 50 years, and the majority is localized to the rectum and the large bowel just above, called the sigmoid region.

### **What are the early symptoms?**

The earliest symptom of large bowel cancer is change in bowel habits. What this means is that your regular bowel habits you have got used for years can change into an irregular pattern, including alternating with constipation and loose motions, and the color could change to dark brown with bleeding from these cancers.

As the cancer progresses you could have pain and more discomfort, and at this stage you need to see your doctor for further screening and investigations.

When diagnosed early, when the cancer is small and localized, it can be removed, and the cure rate could be 100 percent.

The risk of colorectal cancer can be reduced by eating certain foods and avoiding other foods.

### **Adequate nutrition and Diet**

Well-balanced nutritious diet may play a role in lessening cancer risk of the colon and rectum.

Healthy lifestyle choices like eating veggies, fruits, whole grains, legumes, nuts and seeds and fiber-rich diet.

Avoid red meat like beef, lamb and pork and other processed meats like sausages, hot dogs, bacon, and ham.

Cooking meat at high temperatures emanate cancer causing substances.

These chemicals are called Heterocyclic amines and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons formed when muscle meat, including beef, pork, fish, or poultry, is cooked using high temperature methods like deep frying, grilling directly over an open flame.

These chemicals are mutagenic, that is they cause changes in DNA that may increase the risk of cancer.

Eating a high-fat diet increases the risk of many cancers while eating a low-fat diet may decrease the risk.

Eat plenty of fish. Fatty fish like salmon have omega-3 fatty acids that boosts heart health and may inhibit the growth of cancer cells in the gut.

The veggies have cancer preventing nutrients called carotenoids and flavonoids, they have high fiber acting as prebiotics for the microbiota in the large gut.

Whole-grain foods too have high fiber. Always chose whole grain breads and avoid purchasing white processed breads. Other examples of whole grain foods are corn, brown rice, quinoa, and wild rice.

Legumes too have lots of fiber. Eat plenty of lentils and beans. There are many varieties of beans to include in your diet, such as lima beans, black beans, dhal, chickpeas and so on.

Nuts and seeds have high fiber, healthy fat, antioxidants, and phytochemicals that have cancer fighting properties.

Adding plenty of herbs and spices to foods to enhance flavor, seem to inhibit the growth of colo-rectal cancer.

Some studies have shown that diets high in the mineral selenium and the B vitamin folate lowers the risk of colon cancer. Selenium is found sunflower seeds, mushrooms, garlic onions, whole grains, salmon fish, tuna and sardines

Drinking coffee seems to protect you from liver and colorectal cancer.

Include brightly colored fruits in your daily diet. They have cancer fighting nutrients, in addition to vitamins and minerals.

Calcium is a mineral that is required in adequate amounts to prevent colorectal cancer, and studies have shown that low calcium intake increases the risk of colorectal cancer. Vitamin D helps your body absorb calcium.

Calcium rich foods include milk, yogurt, cheese, butter, and ice-cream.

### **The inner lining of the large gut**

The inner lining of the large gut is smooth- we call it the mucosal lining.

The microbiota in your large gut keeps this lining healthy and prevents inflammation and cancerous changes.

### **How do they do this?**

The inner lining of the large gut is covered in a protein called mucin which gives it a gel texture. This is the lubricant and moisturizer that protects the inner lining.

Butyrate is a short chain fatty acid secreted by the microbiomes, that helps to keep abundant mucin in the gut lining.

Trillions of tiny organisms called microbiota composed of bacteria, fungi, parasites, and viruses are active in your large gut and greatly affects human health.

They are the watch dogs of the inner lining of the large gut, preventing pathogens, and other harmful germs causing damaging inflammation, and thereby preventing cancer in the large bowel by imparting the mucosal immune system.

If your immune system is weak means that your microbiome is unhealthy, and we call it dysbiosis.

In this situation your gut microbiome does not produce enough nutrients, especially short-chain fatty acids. These biproducts of the bacteria as mentioned earlier, help maintain the gut lining and even fight off bad bacteria.

### **Screening for Cancer of the large bowel**

Screening is looking for cancer before you get early symptoms. Those who have a family history of cancer or those having change of bowel habits should be screened for large bowel cancer every two years.

Studies show that some screening tests for colorectal cancer help find cancer at an early stage.

Those screening tests include: Fecal occult blood test.

Sigmoidoscopy

Barium enema Xray's

Colonoscopy

Virtual colonoscopy

DNA stool test

Now let us discuss about the Fecal occult blood test.

This test is done to check up blood in the stools which can be seen under the microscope.

That is why it is called an occult test.

If it is positive, colonoscopy needs to be done to check whether there are polyps, cancer, or other condition.

Virtual colonoscopy- is a procedure that uses a series of x-rays called computed tomography to make a series of pictures of the colon.

In DNA stool test, you check DNA in the stool cells for genetic changes that may be a sign of colorectal cancer.

In all these test false-negative test results can occur, and false positive results can also occur. Cancer of the large bowel and including the rectum is preventable, other than having genetic factors.

A healthy diet as mentioned earlier, cultivating good eating habits, and changing your lifestyle are important to prevent colorectal cancer. Daily exercise is essential to be healthy and avoid all forms of cancer and other diseases.

Unavoidable risk factors are the inherited risk, and the avoidable ones are alcohol, and cigarette smoking, staying slim with physical activity and dietetic control.

Eating red meat and processed foods are two risk factors you should avoid.

Studies have shown that taking aspirin lowers the risk of colorectal cancer.

Taking hormone replacement therapy for post-menopausal women seem to lower the risk of colorectal cancer.

On routine colonoscopy every two years, finding colorectal polyps should be removed through the colonoscope, as they can develop into cancer. There is also a type of polyp called the juvenile polyps which is harmless.

Risk factors for colon cancer include family history, colon polyps and longstanding ulcerative colitis.

The risk can be reduced by following a diet mentioned earlier and low in fat and high in fiber. Obesity seems to be another risk factor for colorectal cancer.

Simple sugars in adolescence tied to colorectal adenoma or polyp risk.

An analysis of the Nurses' Health Study II revealed a link between high intake of simple sugars and sugar-sweetened beverages (SSBs) in adolescence and increased risk of conventional colorectal adenoma, especially rectal.

Hyperinsulinemia, meaning there is more insulin in your blood than normal, is often associated with type 2 diabetes.

Hyperinsulinemia is most often caused by insulin resistance- a condition in which your body does not respond well to the effects of insulin.

Hyperinsulinemia is an established risk factor for colorectal cancer.

Cancer seems to be prevalent today in most countries, including among Sri Lankans.

Hope this video talk is useful to bring the awareness to your doorstep.

Thank you for sharing. Stay safe, Goodbye for now.

Ref: Medicine Net article reviewed by Melissa Conrad Stoppler MN

