

## RADIOLOGY INSIGHTS

SPONSORED BY

 Radiology Specialists  
of Florida  
FLORIDA HOSPITAL MEDICAL GROUP

# Colorectal Cancer: *What is It and How to Prevent It*

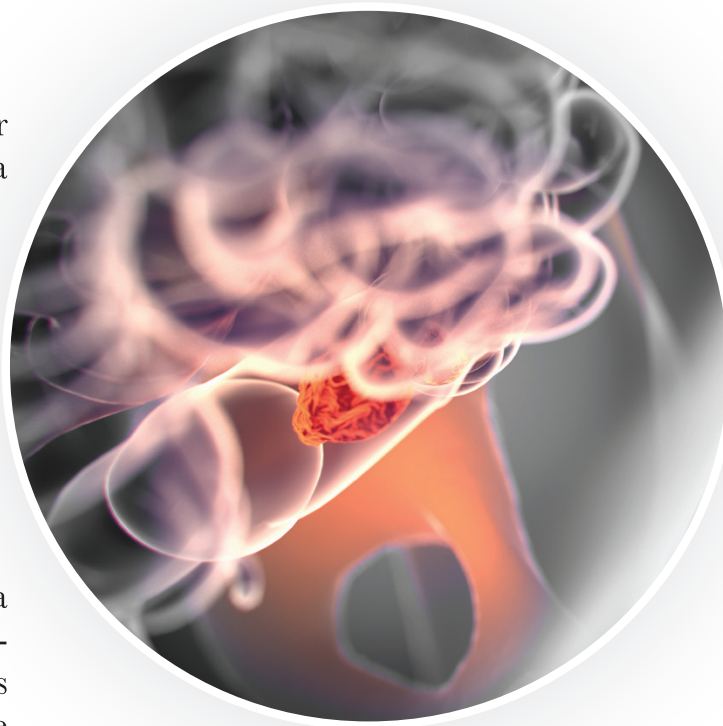
By LEENA KAMAT, MD

March is National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month. Colorectal cancer is a cancer that starts in the colon or rectum. Among cancers that affect both men and women, colorectal cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death in the United States. Every year, about 140,000 Americans are diagnosed with colorectal cancer and more than 50,000 die from it. However, this disease can be preventable.

Most colorectal cancers begin as a growth called a polyp on the inner lining of the colon or rectum. Some types of polyps can change into cancer over the course of several years but not all polyps become cancer.

The risk for colon cancer increases with age and most often found in people 50 or older. Risk factors include personal history of colorectal polyps or cancer, personal history of inflammatory bowel disease, and family history of colorectal cancer. Manageable risk factors include obesity, physical inactivity, diet (high in red and processed meats), smoking, and heavy alcohol use.

This disease is highly preventable by getting screened beginning at age 50. Screening tests help prevent colorectal cancer by finding precancerous polyps so they can be removed. Screening also finds



this cancer early when treatment can be most effective. There are several screening tests: colonoscopy, high sensitivity fecal occult blood testing, sigmoidoscopy, or CT colonography (virtual colonoscopy). Screening is recommended for men and women beginning at age 50 and continuing until age 75.

Some people with colorectal polyps or cancer do have symptoms. This may include blood in the stool, abdominal pain, or unintentional weight loss.

So how do radiologist get involved in the diagnosis and treatment of colorectal cancer? When a patient is diagnosed with cancer...radiology directly impacts

the care. Cancer patients undergo a variety of different scans throughout the course of their treatment, including MRIs, CT and PET scans, and x-rays. A radiologist will review these scans and inform oncologists if the current treatment is either helping or not beneficial to the patient. If the current treatment is not effective, a radiologist, along with an oncologist, will recommend a different course.

The radiologists from Radiology Specialists of Florida at Florida Hospital are very well trained and experienced. We have radiologists specifically trained in body imaging who use imaging techniques to diagnose abnormalities of the bowel and assist with staging of cancer. We keep up to date on the latest technology and information so that we can offer patients the best care.

The Florida Hospital Care Network delivers seamlessly connected healthcare services for all ages. For more information visit [Somedaystartstoday.com](http://Somedaystartstoday.com).



Leena Kamat, MD, is a board certified diagnostic radiologist, sub-specialized in breast imaging for Radiology Specialists of Florida at Florida Hospital. She earned her medical degree at the University of Florida, College of Medicine and following graduation completed her residency at the University of South Florida and a fellowship in breast imaging at the Moffitt Cancer Center.