

Colorectal Cancer: Are You at Risk?

March 20, 2009 - "Colorectal cancer is one of the easiest cancers to prevent since it comes from polyps or flat lesions that can be removed before they become cancerous," says board-certified gastroenterologist **Kavita Tumma, M.D.**

Dr. Tumma, who is one of the team of specialists who provides care at Deckerville Community Hospital, offers a variety of elective services and procedures, including biopsies and colonoscopies.

"In the early stages of colorectal cancer," she states, "a person may not experience any symptoms. But a simple colonoscopy can identify the presence of polyps *before* the disease has a chance to develop. If I could tell my patients only one thing about colorectal cancer, I would tell that *prevention is better than a cure.*"

Colorectal cancer, commonly referred to as colon cancer, is cancer of the colon and/or rectum. Each year, nearly 150,000 people are diagnosed with colon cancer and almost 50,000 die from the disease in the United States. It is the third most commonly diagnosed cancer in men and women and the second leading cause of cancer-related deaths in the United States. Yet, many of these deaths could be prevented with early detection.

Prevention of developing colorectal cancer is connected to several lifestyle choices, which includes the following:

1. Regular exercise.
2. Maintaining a healthy weight
3. Eating a diet rich in fruits, vegetables and whole grains
4. No smoking, and drink alcohol only in moderation

Those at risk for the disease include:

- Men and women age 50 and older
- Family history of colorectal cancer or benign (not cancerous) colorectal polyps
- Family history of inflammatory bowel disease, ulcerative colitis or Crohn's disease
- Family history of inherited colorectal cancer and those who use tobacco, are obese and sedentary

Dr. Tumma and the other healthcare professionals at Deckerville Community Hospital would like to remind you that, if you are 50 or older, it's time to be screened for colorectal cancer. Talk to your primary care doctor and schedule a screening today.

Please visit the American Cancer Society at www.cancer.org to find more information about the importance of getting screened for colon cancer. The ACS has published a brochure entitled "Talk to Your Doctor About Getting Tested for Colon Cancer". You may send an email to infoDCH@deckervillehosp.org to receive your free copy of this brochure.