



COLORECTAL CANCER

When I began my surgical practice in the mid 1970's we were trying to get the message out that colonoscopy was a helpful tool in detecting, but more importantly, in preventing the development of colorectal cancer. It was very satisfying to remove colon polyps which have the potential to develop into a malignancy. At that time, we were trying to get people screened who were over 50 years of age. In most practices, screening throughout the 1980s consisted of a digital rectal exam, testing stool for occult blood and if the patient agreed, a proctosigmoidoscopy, which in that day was a ridged 25 cm metal scope that could give a relatively good look at the lower 20 cm of colon/rectum. The average adult colon is about 5 feet (150 cm) long, so you can see that we were only 'screening' 14% of the colon. Flexible endoscopy came along and allowed us to examine the entire colon. Although many practices in the 1970's and 80's were encouraging patients to have a colonoscopy, it wasn't until the 1990's that the American Cancer Society came on board and said there was a cost/risk/benefit ratio that was in the patients' interest, and they therefore recommended routine colon screening beginning at age 50 with colonoscopy being the gold standard.

The good news is that ever since the 1980s, with widespread acceptance and use of colonoscopy, there has been a decline in the incidence and the mortality from colorectal cancer (CRC). On the 23rd of February I listened to an educational symposium from the Cleveland Clinic on the topic of "Young-Onset Colorectal Cancer" (YOCRC). Since 1994, there has been an increase of 51% in the incidence of colorectal cancer in younger adults, and they are being diagnosed with a more advanced stage of cancer. According to the Cleveland Clinic, 11% of colon cancers and 18% of rectal cancers now occur in people under the age of 50. In 2020, in the under 50 age group, there were in the US 17,930 new cases (49/day) and 3,640 deaths (10/day). These are people in the most productive stage of their careers and 80% have children under the age of 18. Young-onset colorectal cancer disproportionately affects young Black & Hispanic people. Black patients make up 11.3% of average age onset CRC, but 15.1% of YOCRC.

Although we do not know the exact reason why there has been an increase in younger cases of CRC, we do know that the top four things that are associated with this increase are: sedentary lifestyle, sugary beverages, elevated triglycerides, and a BMI greater than 30. Colorectal cancer ranks 5th in research funding following breast, lung, leukemia, and prostate.

March is National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month.

What can you do?

1. Routine colon screening – with a colonoscopy if possible, beginning at age 45.
2. Get your weight under control, cut down on sugar and red meat and eliminate smoking and alcohol.
3. Add more exercise to your daily life
4. Donate to colorectal cancer research
5. Contact your health care professional if you have a family history of colon cancer, if you notice blood in your stool, or a persistent change in your bowel habits.



EARTH DAY | APRIL 22, 2022

All together now! This is the moment to change it all – the business climate, the political climate, and how we take action on climate. Now is the time for unstoppable courage to preserve and protect our health, our families, our livelihoods... together, we must invest in our planet.

We need to act boldly to innovate, and implement change. It's going to take all of us. All in. Businesses, governments, and citizens — everyone accounted for, and everyone accountable. A partnership for the planet.

It's time to solve the climate crisis, time to choose BOTH a prosperous and sustainable future, and time to restore nature and build a healthy planet for our children and their children.

BOW GARDEN CLUB

A \$1,000 Bow Garden Club Scholarship is available for a graduating Bow High School Senior who is pursuing an education in any of the plant sciences (horticulture, conservation, forestry, etc.)

An application may be acquired through the BHS counseling office or by contacting Bow Garden Club Scholarship Chairman Debra Wayne at debrawayne@comcast.net or (603) 715-1466. Applications need to be received by April 30th.

The Bow Garden Club will begin its 2022 club year Monday evening, April 11, with a ZOOM presentation entitled "*Bobcats and Other Wildlife in NH.*" The presenter will be Don Allen, a Fish & Wildlife Steward with NH Fish & Game. The program will begin at 6:30 p.m. and will be followed by a brief business meeting for members. Non-garden club members can email president@bowgardenclub.org and they will be sent the ZOOM link for the presentation.

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