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**Colon Cancer**

I chose to do my research paper on colon cancer because it has been in my family and I don’t know a lot about the disease. When my mom was in kindergarten, her father passed away of colon cancer. Since my mom is at the age where doctors recommend getting a colonoscopy and her father had colon cancer, she is planning to get one in a couple months. It breaks my heart to know how worried she is about it. I don’t want her to have to go through being scared and not knowing if she has it until the results come back. I have been trying to comfort her as much as I can and let her know everything will be okay no matter what happens.

So there is definitely a lot to learn about this type of cancer. First I want to just talk about what it is exactly. The colon is where our body stores our waste materials. It is connected to the rectum and called the large intestine. Cancer of the colon and rectum can invade and damage adjacent tissues and organs. (MedicineNet.com). The cancer cells can also break away and spread to different parts of the body like the liver or lung where new tumors form. The tumors that form in the large intestine are called Benign polyps. This kind of tumor can be removed in a colonoscopy. Once the cancer has spread to other areas of the body, the cure for the cancer is unlikely.

Doctors say that you should have a colonoscopy done when you’re at the age of 50 and every ten years after that. It is a procedure done to see the inside of your colon. They use a four foot long tube with a camera attached to it and insert it through the anus into the first part of the colon called the cecum. The reason for this is because doctors want figure out the cause of the abdominal pain, diarrhea or blood in the stool. To prepare for the colonoscopy, the patient takes a drink of cleansing solution to clean out the colon for the procedure.

Cancer of the colon is when the cells keep growing and do not die. Instead, they grow and divide. Colon Cancer is the 4th leading cause of cancer in males, and the third leading cause for cancer in women. (MedicineNet.com) The cause of it can be from family history or from a high fat intake. Men who do therapy to treat prostate cancer, may be increasing their risk of developing colon cancer (Journal of the National Cancer Institute).

There are many different things that can cause this type of cancer. A few are age, alcohol, diet, diabetes, family medical history, and IBD (Inflammatory Bowel Disease. Anyone that is diagnosed with IBD should get a colonoscopy 8 to 12 years after their initial diagnosis and another one every year or two after that, according to the American Cancer Society. (About.com)

A study in the journal *Gastroenterology* found that insulin dependency contributes to colon cancer development. People with diabetes are 40% more likely to develop colon cancer than non-diabetics.

The symptoms of colon cancer aren’t always obvious. People can learn more about the symptoms if they know a little bit more about the colon. At the early stages of the cancer, some people don’t have any symptoms at all. That is why it is good to go in for a checkup at the age of 50.

Doctors have put the symptoms in two different categories called Local and Systematic. The local symptoms affect your bathroom habits and the colon. Some are changes in your habits, constipation, diarrhea or blood in the stool. If you experience any of those for more than 2 weeks then you should notify your doctor.

Bowel movement is how regular you go to the bathroom each day. If you are only having one each day then that can mean constipation or a symptom of colon cancer or inflammatory bowel disease. You don’t need to record how many times you go to the bathroom each day but it is a good idea to know how often you do go in case you have changes in bowel movements.

The systematic symptoms include weight loss, loss of appetite, vomiting, Anemia or jaundice. Jaundice means that there is yellowish to the skin and whites to the eyes. Anemia is when you have low iron in your red blood cells. If you have any of these symptoms then you need to call your doctor right away. They will then look at your medical history, test your blood cells and any other tests if needed. If you are diagnosed with cancer in the earliest stages then the survival rate is over 90% (About.com).

There are a few different way to treat colon cancer. You can have surgery, which is the most common treatment for it. There is also Chemotherapy and Radiation therapy. During surgery, they remove the tumors and lymph nodes. Then they reconnect the healthy parts of the bowel. If a patient has rectum cancer then the surgeon has to completely remove the rectum. The surgeon then has to make an opening in the abdominal wall which the waste in the colon is excreted. The patient can return to a normal lifestyle after with the help of specially trained nurses.

Chemotherapy is used to go through the body to kill the cancer cells. It is the most common used treatment for stage 4 of colon cancer. It is usually given in a number of treatments. There are some side effects of chemotherapy but they are manageable. Some are hair loss, loss of energy, bruise easily, and anemia which we talked about earlier. The cells divide fast throughout the body and that can cause the hair loss, mouths sores, vomiting and diarrhea. Chemotherapy is given either by pill or an injection.

More than half of all people diagnosed with cancer will need to receive chemotherapy. Millions of them will find that this type of treatment is effective and safe. Their lives are longer and happier because they've had this kind of therapy. The average number of weeks to get through chemotherapy is 6 weeks. I guess I didn’t realize it takes just over a month I always though it would be a lot longer than that. Even though it doesn’t seem like a long time I still wouldn’t ever want to go through that and my heart goes out to those patients.

A diet when you have colon cancer doesn’t control it but it is good to eat enough calories so you are at a good weight. Because of the side effects of chemotherapy, a patient may not have much of an appetite. The chemotherapy takes away your energy. To get some of that energy back it is important to eat healthy. Also some patients say that food doesn’t taste as good to them as their going through their treatments. The risk of colon cancer was 2.5 times higher in women who ate pork, beef or lamb as a main meal every day, as compared to those eating less than once a month.

Some of the top anti-cancer vegetables are broccoli, Brussels sprouts, carrots, cabbage and cauliflower. Then some of the top anti-fruits are apricots, blueberries, grapefruit and grapes. Vitamin C and E can interfere with the Chemotherapy’s ability to kill the cancer cells. A dietitian or Nutritionist can help a patient figure out what supplements are okay to take. When you are on a diet for colon cancer you want to avoid eating toxins and “Food that kills”. Food that kills are foods like margarine, salt, sugar, pesticides, refined oils, and soft drinks.

Climate and seasons are very important. The climate can affect the world physically like the vegetation and soil patterns, also agriculture and population. Since we live in a moderate climate which is over 50% of the world’s population, most of the fruits, vegetables and nuts we consume should be growing in the same climatic region. Besides climate and season, your blood type, your genetics and your age are important factors that will shape your food needs.

Vegetables grown in the warmer climatic region are sweeter than a vegetable grown in a colder climate. You should follow the climatic rules and choose vegetables that are grown in the same climate.

3 ways to even reduce the risk of cancer more are exercising, staying lean and reducing stress. When you work out, it moves your bowels so this will help with reducing the risk of cancer. It also boosts your immune system! Physical activity helps cleansing, brings balance and reduces stress. There are different activities that can help you reduce stress but you need to find the one that fits you. Some are yoga, dancing, swimming, weight lifting, fishing, or meditation.

Any of those activities will help reduce stress but make sure you don’t do those with a full stomach or exhaust yourself. You don’t want to over work yourself, but sweating is a good way to cleanse your body. To do this, you can work out with extra clothes on, sit in a sauna, or drink warm tea in a hot room. Body cleansing is very important and cleans out the toxins in our body. There are different kinds of cleanses you can do and there are even some for kids. A bowel cleanse should be done once a year for adults.

There are many ways to help prevent colon cancer. If it is in your family history then you can’t really do anything about that so it’s important to do all the other things to prevent it. Two big things are to not drink alcohol or smoke. Smoking does cause lung cancer but it can also contribute to colon cancer. Each year, more than 400,000 Americans die from cigarette smoking.

I hope this report has helped you to learn and understand a lot more about colon cancer. It is very important that every person gets checked by the age of 50. There are many ways to reduce the risk of cancer and it’s better to start doing those things now than later.

**Works Cited**

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**MedicineNet.com**

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