



### Colorectal Cancer Screening Can Save Your Life

Unlike some other cancers, colorectal cancer (also called CRC or colon cancer) is highly preventable and can be detected early through screening; yet it remains the third most commonly diagnosed cancer in men and women in the United States and is the second leading cancer killer. The American Cancer Society (ACS) estimates 125,000 people will be diagnosed with colorectal cancer in 2009 and it will claim approximately 50,000 American lives this year.

According to the American Cancer Society, about half of those lives could be saved if people better understood the risks for the disease and got tested regularly. Colon cancer screening tests identify suspicious or pre-cancerous polyps, which can be removed before they develop into a serious problem.

The diagnosis of colorectal cancer in high-profile individuals, including Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg and sports figures like Darryl Strawberry and Eric Davis, has helped raise awareness of the disease. However, societal roadblocks still need to be overcome to make cancer screening a regular part of everyone's health care. Many people find colon cancer an embarrassing topic to discuss, even with their doctors.

In the U.S., people whose colorectal cancers are found early have five-year survival rates of greater than 90 percent. Unfortunately, due to the lack of aggressive screening, only 39 percent of colorectal cancers are detected in the earliest stages. Of those whose cancers are found at the late stage, the five-year survival rate is less than 10 percent.

Washington Imaging Services encourages and supports cancer prevention through patient education and screening of all preventable cancers, including colorectal, breast, skin, cervical, lung, oral, prostate and testicular cancers.

Use this guide to help you discuss screening options with your health care professional. Tests that find pre-cancer and cancer:

- Colonoscopy—every 10 years
- Flexible sigmoidoscopy—every 5 years
- Virtual colonoscopy (CT colonography)—every 5 years
- Double-contrast barium enema—every 5 years

If you are diagnosed with cancer, PET/CT imaging should be considered to stage your disease before any intervention is started.

For additional information about colon cancer detection and prevention, call the American Cancer Society toll-free anytime 1-800-ACS-2345 or visit their website at [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org).