



WHAT HISPANIC AMERICANS NEED TO KNOW ABOUT COLORECTAL CANCER



Colorectal cancer is cancer of the colon or rectum. It is the second leading cause of cancer death in the United States for men and women combined, and will account for 56,290 deaths in 2005. All men and women are at risk for colorectal cancer.

Nine out of 10 colorectal cancer cases and deaths can be prevented. Exercise and eating healthy foods such as vegetables and fruits can help prevent colorectal cancer.

Screening tests are also important. These tests can help prevent colorectal cancer by finding polyps – grape-like growths on the lining of the colon and rectum. These polyps can be removed before they become cancerous. Screening can also detect cancer early when it can be treated and cured.

REMEMBER THESE IMPORTANT FACTS:

- Colorectal cancer is the third most commonly diagnosed cancer in Hispanic Americans, accounting for an estimated 2,300 deaths per year.
- Hispanic Americans are less likely to get screened for the disease than either Caucasians or African Americans. Starting at age 50, all men and women should begin having colorectal cancer screening tests. Some people are at higher risk for the disease because of age, lifestyle or personal and family medical history, but colorectal cancer affects men and women alike.
- Tell your health care professional if you have a personal or family history of colorectal cancer, colorectal polyps or inflammatory bowel disease. Then ask which test you should have and when you should begin colorectal cancer screening.
- There are many obstacles to colon screening, including reluctance to talk about colon cancer and embarrassment about having procedures involving the colon or tests which require stool samples; thus, so many people are hesitant to be properly tested.
- Routine screening tests can help prevent colorectal cancer and can detect cancer at a treatable stage. Colonoscopy, performed by a well-trained endoscopist, gastroenterologist, or surgeon is the most effective screening test and plays an important role in colon cancer prevention because precancerous polyps can be removed when they are discovered.