



Your gastrointestinal tract is one of the most important systems in your body. Keep it healthy with routine colorectal screenings.



Tanuja Damani, MD

THE INS AND OUTS of Colorectal Health

First, the bad news: colorectal cancer is one of the leading causes of cancer-related death in the United States. The good news? Nearly all colorectal cancers begin as benign polyps. That means colorectal cancer is one of the easiest forms of cancer to detect in its early, more treatable stages.

ACT BEFORE YOU REACT

Receiving regular screenings is the single most important thing you can do to detect and remove these polyps to fight the progression of colorectal cancer. The American Cancer Society recommends both men and women follow one of the following screening guidelines beginning at age 50:

- Flexible sigmoidoscopy every 5 years
- Colonoscopy every 10 years
- Double-contrast barium enema every five years
- Virtual colonoscopy every five years

If you have a family or personal history of colorectal polyps or cancer, ask your primary care physician about scheduling colonoscopies earlier or more frequently.

“Colorectal cancer is highly curable when found early on,” says Tanuja Damani, MD, gastrointestinal and laparoscopic surgeon at Englewood Hospital and Medical Center.

“People often experience much better

outcomes as a result of adhering to the recommended screening schedule.”

HOPE AFTER DIAGNOSIS

Colorectal cancer almost always can be treated surgically when detected early. At Englewood Hospital, patients benefit from a high level of expertise in minimally invasive surgery and surgical oncology. Surgeons at Englewood Hospital utilize both robotic and laparoscopic techniques to remove

cancer with less invasive techniques. Laparoscopic surgery involves the use of miniscule cameras that transmit magnified, high-resolution images of the inside of the body to an external monitor in real time.

“Laparoscopic techniques allow us to achieve better visualization of the cancer without having to make large, painful incisions,” Dr. Damani says. “Instead of a 12-inch incision, laparoscopic surgery only requires a few, millimeter-long incisions. This approach affords patients shorter recovery times and reduces the formation of scar tissue that can lead to future bowel blockages.”

For more information on Cancer Care at Englewood Hospital, visit BestOncologyDocs.com.

YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT



We all know diet and nutrition play a big role in preventing certain cancers. When it comes to gastrointestinal cancers, healthy eating may be especially important. According to the American Institute for Cancer Research, nearly half of all colorectal cancers in the United States can be prevented through diet and physical activity. The National Institutes of Health (NIH) notes that colon cancer in particular may be associated with a high-fat, low-fiber diet that includes large amounts of red meat. However, the NIH warns that not enough information is available yet to establish a definitive link.

