

# INSTITUTE FOR PREVENTIVE HEALTHCARE & ADVOCACY



Kathey Avery, RN, BSN

**Avery Health - Education and Consulting** brings extensive experience and knowledge to help individuals and groups achieve positive health outcomes and implement equity.

**Kathey Avery**, founder and owner of Avery Health - Education and Consulting, has more than 35 years of experience in healthcare and community activism. She is dedicated to raising awareness about, and helping in the prevention of, chronic diseases and preventable cancers through patient and public education and personal accountability.

Contact Kathey Avery today at 828-768-2369 to schedule a talk or workshop. For more details, please visit [www.AveryHEC.com](http://www.AveryHEC.com)



The mission of the **Institute for Preventive Healthcare & Advocacy** is to promote optimum health for all residents of Buncombe County and surrounding areas by addressing the social determinants of health and the inequities in access to affordable and preventive healthcare.

[www.ifpha.org](http://www.ifpha.org)

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Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

## March is National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month

BY KATHEY AVERY RN, BSN, CN

*Not surprisingly, African Americans are at greater risk of developing colon cancer.*

Recently, actor Chadwick Boseman, star of *Black Panther*, died at the age of 43 from colon cancer. Locally, in May 2016, we lost one of our communities beloved civil rights activists and longtime community leader, Isaac Coleman, from colon cancer. He was 72.

### Did You Know?

African Americans in the US are at a higher risk of developing colon cancer. 20% are more likely to get colon cancer than white Americans, and 40% are more likely to die.

Many wonder why this is the case. Some of the reasons include high risk factors, less access to health care (including cancer detection and screening), less comprehensive insurance, and, many times, less access to healthy foods.

**First:** African Americans have the highest colorectal cancer incidence and mortality rates of all racial groups in the United States. There is a strong link between diet, weight, exercise, and colorectal cancer risk.

**Second:** Screenings for African Americans may need to take place at an earlier age.

**Third:** If you have private health insurance there is a 30% higher relative 5-year survival rate compared with that of uninsured African Americans.

### Be Aware of the Symptoms

If you do not have insurance or a primary care physician, don't ignore symptoms, go to an Urgent Care, especially if you have any of the following symptoms for more than a few days. This is the advice I gave Isaac Coleman when he described his symptoms to me and shared that he had not had a colonoscopy.

Contact your primary care physician if any of these symptoms persist:

- Any change in bowel habits like constipation, diarrhea, or narrow stool
- Rectal bleeding
- Blood in stool making it look dark brown or black
- Cramping or pain in the abdomen
- Weakness and fatigue
- Unexplained weight loss
- Feeling like you need to move your bowels, yet it is not relieved afterward

### Colon Cancer Risk Factors

- Age
- Personal history of colorectal polyps or colorectal cancer
- Personal history of inflammatory bowel disease
- Family history of colorectal cancer
- Inherited syndromes such as Familial Adenomatous Polyposis (FAP)
- Racial and ethnic background
- Lifestyle related factors, such as physical inactivity, obesity, certain types of diets.
- Type 2 diabetes

Deaths from colon cancer could be avoided with health screenings. Follow the guidelines your doctor suggests. On your 50th birthday get your first screening; it can save your life.

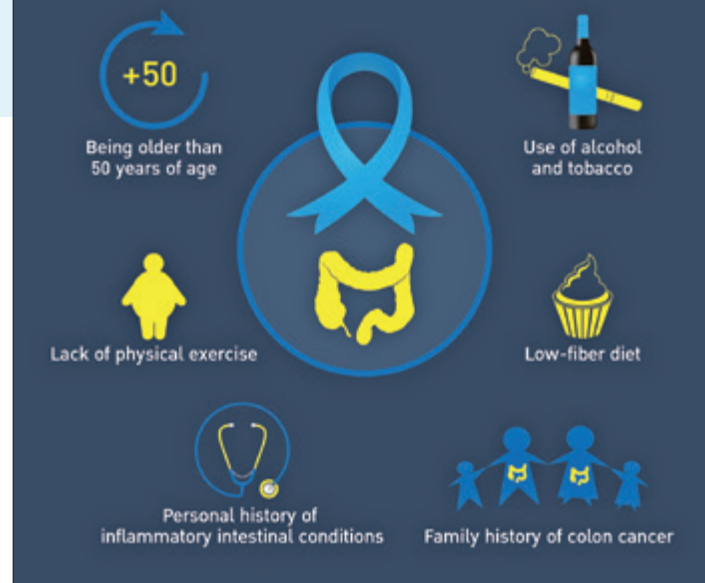
### Screening, Early Detection, and Survival

The American Cancer Society recommends that those with a higher risk for colon cancer begin screening at age 45.



Contact your primary care physician if you have persistent cramping or pain in your abdomen, unexplained weight loss, or have blood in stool for more than a few days.

### COLON CANCER RISK FACTORS



There are several screening tools available, including at home kits, and of course, colonoscopies.

IFPHA nurses recently helped one of our clients complete her at home Cologuard test. We have also been called to take people to and from their colonoscopies when transportation was an issue.

A colonoscopy finds and removes any polyps before they can become cancerous. It can also find cancer early when it is still small and has not spread, making it easier to treat and improve survival rates.

As obesity rates have increased, the number of colorectal cancer cases has increased as well.

**Weight:** As you gain body fat, your risk for colorectal cancer increases.

**Alcohol:** Risk for colorectal cancer increases as alcohol intake increases.

**Inactivity:** Regular physical activity protects against colorectal cancer, but a sedentary lifestyle increases your risk.

**Red Meat:** Diets high in beef, pork and lamb increase colorectal cancer risk, which is why the American Institute for Cancer Research (AICR) recommends limiting red meat to 18 ounces (cooked) per week.

**Processed Meats:** Regular intake of even small amounts of cold cuts, bacon, sausage, and hot dogs have been shown to increase colorectal cancer risk, which is why AICR recommends avoiding these foods.

Source: Colorectal Surgical Associates, PC