

INSTITUTE FOR PREVENTIVE HEALTHCARE & ADVOCACY



Kathey Avery, RN, BSN, CN

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

The Institute for Preventive Healthcare & Advocacy



Promoting 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

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March is Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month

BY KATHEY AVERY RN, BSN, CN

Is Your Lifestyle Putting You at Risk for Colorectal Cancer?

According to the Cancer Research Institute staff, colorectal cancer rates are skyrocketing in young adults. For most adults age 50 and younger, colorectal cancer is not on your radar.

Once considered a disease of older age, colorectal cancer is rising at an alarming rate in younger adults. Today, 1 in 5 diagnoses occurs in someone under the age of 55. It has become a leading cause of cancer-related death in young people.

In the United States, colon cancer and rectal cancer—collectively known as colorectal cancer (CRC)—is the third most commonly diagnosed cancer and the third leading cause of cancer-related death in both men and women. The American Cancer Society estimates that in 2026 alone, approximately 108,860 new cases of CRC will be diagnosed in the US, with about 55,230 deaths.

The lifetime risk is sobering; about 1 in 25 men and 1 in 26 women will develop colorectal cancer. Even more concerning, cases of CRC are on the rise in younger adults. Today, 1 in 5 people diagnosed with CRC are under age 55, and it is now the leading cause of cancer-related death among young adults.

Once considered primarily a disease of older age, CRC is rising at an alarming rate in people under 50 (nearly 3% per year) even as incidence has declined slightly in the overall population.

Experts estimate that more than half of CRC cases in the US may be linked to modifiable risk factors, including diet, physical inactivity, smoking, and alcohol use. Understanding these risks, and taking proactive steps, can make a meaningful difference.

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
- Fatigue or low iron levels

If you experience any of these symptoms, don't ignore them. Schedule an appointment with your doctor to discuss your concerns.

Lifestyle-related factors like physical inactivity, obesity. Diets high in red meats (beef, lamb, or liver), and processed meats (hot dogs and some luncheon meats), can increase colorectal cancer risk. Cooking meats at high temperatures (frying, broiling, and grilling) create chemicals that are being researched in increasing cancer risk. Eat more fruits and vegetables.

Early Detection Saves Lives

Colorectal cancer is often preventable—and highly treatable when detected early. Screening guidelines generally recommend beginning regular screening at age 45. If you have additional risk factors, you may need to start earlier. Talk with your doctor about the right screening plan for you.

Common Screening Options

Colonoscopy – The gold standard for CRC screening. A flexible, camera-equipped scope examines the entire colon and rectum and can remove precancerous polyps during the same procedure.

Stool-Based Tests – These tests detect blood or abnormal DNA in stool samples. Some options can be completed at home.

Blood-Based Screening Tests – In 2024, the FDA approved the first blood test for colorectal cancer screening. These tests detect tumor-derived DNA fragments in the bloodstream, offering a less invasive option that may increase screening participation. While promising, they do not replace colonoscopy for all patients, and should be dis-



If you are experiencing persistent abdominal pain or discomfort, such as cramps or bloating, schedule an appointment with your doctor.

cussed with a healthcare provider.

Advances in screening are helping detect CRC earlier, when it is most treatable. One of the preventive measures to prevent colorectal cancer is making sure you schedule your colonoscopy. Why?

Colon polyps are common, and many are harmless. But some types can grow into cancer if they aren't removed. This is why healthcare providers look for polyps in your colon during a colonoscopy, an exam inside your colon. While polyps aren't cancer, almost all colorectal cancer starts from a polyp.

Sources: Cancer Research Institute (www.cancerresearch.org); Cleveland Clinic (my.clevelandclinic.org).

Lunch & Learn



Join Kathey Avery on the third and fourth

Wednesdays of the month from 12-1 p.m. at the Linwood Crump Shiloh Community Center, 121 Shiloh Road in Asheville. The community nurse will address "Hot Topics" and provide education and knowledge to help keep you healthy. All are welcome!

A Successful Black History Month Celebration

I would like to take this time to thank so many of you who joined IFPHA at Mary C. Jenkins Community and Cultural Center in Brevard for our Black History celebration with the first WNC History Symposium.

Five speakers from WNC shared their stories and some history from their counties: Anita White-Carter (Buncombe), Ronnie

Pepper (Henderson), Ann Miller Woodford (Cherokee), Tausha Forney (Haywood), Edith Darity (Transylvania), and poet Nicola Karesh.

The participation of speakers from five counties, and even Greenville, SC, made us proud of being able to share that African Americans have lived for generations in

these mountains with strength and pride. I would also like to thank Kate B. Reynolds for documenting the event and stories.

Stay tuned for more amazing stories!



Ann Miller Woodford



Tausha Forney



Ronnie Pepper



Nicola Karesh



Anita White-Carter



Edith Darity