

NEWS RELEASE



For more information, contact:
Karen Anderson
kcanderson@halifaxrmc.org
252 535-8025

For Immediate Release

COLORECTAL CANCER IS PREVENTABLE

Dr. O'Connor Urges Screenings for People over 50

ROANOKE RAPIDS, NC (March 8, 2012)—March is National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month, an opportunity for Rory O'Connor, M.D. of the Digestive Health Center at Halifax Regional, to remind people over 50 to schedule a screening to prevent colon cancer.

“Colon or colorectal cancer is largely preventable with regular screening and is treatable with early detection,” explains Dr. O'Connor. People over 50 or with a family history of colorectal cancer should be screened.

“Some studies have shown that African-Americans are more frequently diagnosed with colon cancer at a younger age, leading some experts to suggest that African Americans should begin screening at age 45,” he said.

A new study reported in *The New York Times* says colonoscopy prevents death. In patients tracked for as long as 20 years, the death rate from colorectal cancer was reduced by 53 percent in those who had the test and whose doctors removed precancerous growths, known as adenomatous polyps, researchers reported in the *New England Journal of Medicine*.

Colorectal tumors are a major cause of cancer death in the United States. This year, more than 143,000 new cases and 51,000 deaths are expected. Incidence and death rates have been declining for about 20 years, probably because of increased use of screening tests and better treatments.

But only 6 in 10 adults are up to date on getting screened for colorectal cancer, according to federal estimates.

For information about screenings, call Eastern Carolina Gastroenterology at 253 535-1800.

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About Halifax Regional Halifax Regional Medical Center is licensed for 204 beds, including psychiatric and nursery. A non-profit organization, Halifax Regional is fully accredited by the Joint Commission. For more information, visit www.halifaxregional.org.