

-FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE-

New Guidelines Recommend Colorectal Cancer Screening at Age 45



William Lee, M.D., FACS, board certified general surgeon affiliated with Salem General Surgery and Salem Regional Medical Center's (SRMC) medical staff.

---SALEM, OH (November 13, 2020)---Adults should begin screening for colorectal cancer starting at age 45 instead of 50, according to new draft recommendations from the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force.

The Task Force updated its screening guidelines as rates of colorectal cancer continue to increase among younger Americans. Colorectal cancer is the third leading cause of cancer death in the United States, but it is highly treatable and often preventable with early detection.

"It's estimated that sixty percent of colorectal cancer deaths could be prevented with regular screening," said

William Lee, M.D., FACS, a board certified general surgeon affiliated with Salem General Surgery and Salem Regional Medical Center's (SRMC) medical staff. "Most colorectal cancers start as benign polyps, or growths, on the lining of the colon. Polyps often produce no symptoms and may become cancerous over time."

"Screening can also help detect cancer early, often before there are symptoms, when treatment may be most effective," said Dr. Lee.

Types of screening tests for colorectal cancer include at-home stool-based tests and visual screenings, such as colonoscopies. Dr. Lee recommends that patients talk to their health care providers about which screening options are right for them.

Colorectal cancer screenings, including traditional and virtual CT colonoscopies, can be performed at SRMC with a physician's order. Dr. Lee noted that only a colonoscopy or a virtual colonoscopy can find precancerous polyps, before they turn into cancer.

"If you are at an increased risk for colorectal cancer, such as those with a family history of colon cancer or a personal history of other cancers or colorectal diseases,

U.S. Preventive Services Task Force

Updated Colorectal Cancer Screening Recommendations

- **Ages 45 – 75:** Those at average risk for colorectal cancer should be screened.
- **Ages 76 – 85:** Ask your doctor if you should be screened.
- **Those at increased risk:** Risk factors for colorectal cancer include a family history of colon cancer or a personal history of other cancers or colorectal diseases. Should you have one or more of these risk factors, your doctor may suggest that you begin screening before age 45.

your doctor may recommend being screened earlier,” he added.

Don't Delay Screenings During COVID-19

“The pandemic is not a reason to put off your screening. A delay in the diagnosis of colorectal cancer can shorten your chances of survival. As colorectal cancer rates among younger people increase, it's even more important to be mindful of your screening in order to achieve the best possible outcome,” Dr. Lee said.

In order to help ensure the health and well-being of patients and staff during their visit, SRMC has implemented several enhanced safety precautions. These measures include reconfigured waiting areas and scheduling that promotes social distancing, in addition to frequent sanitization of chairs, exam tables and patient care areas. Patients must wear masks to help maintain the health and safety of all patients and caregivers.

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