

[MUSIC PLAYING]

Why is it important for people to get screened regularly for colorectal cancer?

Colorectal cancer is one of the leading causes of cancer deaths in the United States and worldwide. On average, every year 50,000 to 55,000 Americans die of colorectal cancer. Numerous more cases are diagnosed but are caught early and people survive this disease.

The goal of colorectal cancer treatment is really prevention. We, as health care providers, want to prevent patients from progressing from polyps to colorectal cancer. Polyps are a type of growth that we encounter in the colon wall, which, with established science and data from studies previously, tend to grow at a very slow rate. These polyps, over time, on average 7 to 10 years, can then mutate and turn into colorectal cancers.

Our goal is to prevent these polyps from transforming into colorectal cancer and catching the disease, if present, early to allow for treatment. Patients who catch their disease early with screening and a stage one colon cancer have almost a 95% to 96% chance of surviving this cancer with surgery alone. Once colorectal cancer advances from stage one to stage two and stage three, the survivability rate goes down significantly. Hence, we want to catch this disease early.

Colorectal cancer is a disease that people are oftentimes embarrassed about talking with their peers, with their family members, but it's a discussion that we need to have. And as health care providers at Allina, we need to have the discussion with patients to help coordinate which colorectal cancer screening modality is best for that.

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