

Join Atrium Health Navicent in Recognizing Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month

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MACON, Ga., March 12, 2024 – The community is invited to join [Atrium Health Navicent Peyton Anderson Cancer Center](#) in recognizing March as National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month. Colorectal cancer, a combined term for colon cancer and rectal cancer, is the third most diagnosed type of cancer and the second most common cause of cancer death among men and women in the United States.

According to the American Cancer Society (ACS), the lifetime risk of developing colorectal cancer is 1 in 23 for men and 1 in 25 for women in the U.S. The ACS estimates that in 2024 there will be 106,590 new cases of colon and 46,220 new cases of rectal cancer, leading to 53,010 deaths.

The death rate from colorectal cancer is particularly high in central Georgia where 14.8 deaths per 100,000 people can be attributed to the disease, higher than the national average of 13.7 deaths per 100,000 people.

Regular screenings can detect colorectal cancer — and precancerous, abnormal growths — early, when it's easiest to provide treatment and when positive outcomes are most likely.

"Colorectal screenings are essential in detecting precancerous, abnormal growths before they turn into cancer," said Dr. David Armstrong, an Atrium Health Navicent colorectal surgeon. "What many patients may not realize is that we're able to remove precancerous and abnormal growths during the same colonoscopy procedure when they're discovered. Unfortunately, symptoms of colorectal cancer may not become evident until the cancer has become quite advanced. That's why it's important to stay up-to-date with prescribed screenings and discuss any family history with your doctor."

For individuals of average risk, the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force recommends screening for colorectal cancer starting at age 45 and continuing until age 75. However, you may need to start getting tested before age 45, or more often than other people, if you have inflammatory bowel disease or a family history of colorectal cancer or colorectal polyps. The decision to be screened between ages 76 and 85 should be made on an individual basis by talking to your doctor.

During this endoscopic procedure, a scope is used to examine a patient's colon from end to end, looking for any signs of growths or polyps. Polyps can be removed during the procedure to prevent the development of colon cancer.

Here are five facts you may not know about colonoscopies:

1. When your doctor orders a colonoscopy, you'll receive prep instructions and a special liquid drink to cleanse your digestive system. It is important to follow the instructions so that your colon will be clean and easy to examine.
2. You'll be in and out in about four hours, and the actual procedure itself only takes about 45 minutes.
3. You won't feel anything during the procedure due to the administration of IV anesthesia, which also puts you to sleep.
4. When you wake up, you'll be taken to a private room for recovery. The medical staff will discuss with you the results of your procedure and answer any questions you may have.
5. After fasting for the procedure, you'll likely be hungry. By the time you are discharged, your digestive system will be functioning normally, and you can immediately resume food and drink.

If you've been diagnosed with colorectal cancer, physicians at the Atrium Health Navicent Peyton Anderson Cancer Center are available to provide multidisciplinary, integrated and comprehensive care. Our surgeons — which have trained and taught at some of the most prestigious surgical programs in the world — offer minimally invasive robotic and laparoscopic procedures to improve patient outcomes and speed recovery.

Atrium Health Navicent holds accreditation from the National Accreditation Program for Rectal Cancer (NAPRC), a quality program of the American College of Surgeons, and provides patients with peace of mind that they are receiving the best possible care. The cancer center was the first in Georgia to receive [NAPRC accreditation](#).

For more information about screenings for colon cancer, or to find a doctor, visit www.NavicentHealth.org and click “Find A Doctor.”

About Atrium Health Navicent

Atrium Health Navicent is the leading provider of health care in central and south Georgia and is committed to its mission of elevating health and well-being through compassionate care. Atrium Health Navicent is part of [Advocate Health](#), which is headquartered in Charlotte, North Carolina, and is the third-largest nonprofit health system in the United States, created from the combination of Atrium Health and Advocate Aurora Health. Atrium Health Navicent provides high-quality, personalized care in 53 specialties at more than 50 facilities throughout the region. As part of the largest, integrated, nonprofit health system in the Southeast, it is also able to tap into some of the nation's leading medical experts and specialists with Atrium Health, allowing it to provide the best care close to home – including advanced innovations in virtual medicine and care. Throughout its 125-year history in the community, Atrium Health Navicent has remained dedicated to enhancing health and wellness for individuals throughout the region through nationally recognized quality care, community health initiatives and collaborative partnerships. It is also one of the leading teaching hospitals in the region, helping to ensure viability for rural health care for the next generation. For more information, please visit www.NavicentHealth.org.

About Advocate Health

[Advocate Health](#) is the third-largest nonprofit integrated health system in the United States – created from the combination of Advocate Aurora Health and [Atrium Health](#). Providing care under the names [Advocate Health Care](#) in Illinois, Atrium Health in the Carolinas, Georgia and Alabama, and [Aurora Health Care](#) in Wisconsin, Advocate Health is a national leader in clinical innovation, health outcomes, consumer experience and value-based care, with [Wake Forest University School of Medicine](#) serving as the academic core of the enterprise. Headquartered in Charlotte, North Carolina, Advocate Health serves nearly 6 million patients and is engaged in hundreds of clinical trials and research studies. It is nationally recognized for its expertise in cardiology, neurosciences, oncology, pediatrics and rehabilitation, as well as organ transplants, burn treatments and specialized musculoskeletal programs. Advocate Health employs nearly 155,000 team members across 68 hospitals and over 1,000 care locations and offers one of the nation's largest graduate medical education programs with over 2,000 residents and fellows across more than 200 programs. Committed to equitable care for all, Advocate Health provides nearly \$6 billion in annual community benefits.

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