



Colonoscopy or Cancer? CRC patient receives colonoscopy in nick of time

Karen W. was doing everything right. She had a family history of colon issues. Both of her parents and a sibling had dealt with various colon diseases. Her fourteen year career in a pathology department also educated her on the importance of early detection for successfully treating a cancer diagnosis. So when she turned 50, Karen knew it was time for a colonoscopy screening. However, when her gynecologist ordered the test, she found out that her insurance company would not cover the cost.

It took her nearly 2 years to finally receive the test, which was administered under the care of CRC's Dr. Narayanan, and yielded results that required treatment immediately. *The Inside Tract* spoke with Karen W.

recently about her ordeal and how she finally was able to get the help she needed.

IT: *After your gynecologist ordered the screening colonoscopy, how did you discover that your insurance company would not cover the cost?*

KW: I called the Colon & Rectal Care Center and they sent me a package of papers to fill out. One item was to check with your insurance. At that time, when I called the insurance company, screening colonoscopies were not covered. We had a wellness benefit of \$600 per year and that could be applied to the colonoscopy, but the estimated charge was \$3,000. I couldn't afford that. So, I didn't make the appointment. I skated past her questions the next annual visit with

the explanation of not being able to pay out of pocket.

IT: *So how was the matter finally resolved?*

KW: My dad very unexpectedly passed away with a colon condition called ischemic bowel necrosis. Although this was nothing that would have been detected on a colonoscopy, it heightened my own need to make sure my colon was healthy. I went back to the annual appointment and told my doctor about my dad. We followed the same steps of referring me to the Colon & Rectal Care Center, I made a call to my insurance etc., but this time I was informed that the insurance had been changed and my colonoscopy would be covered. This change was less than a month old.

My GYN physician had a surgical procedure the previous summer with Dr. Narayanan. I said, "If he's good enough for you, he's good enough for me." I was so nervous. After my initial exam I had some issues that he felt would take precedence over the screening colonoscopy and asked that I schedule two tests at Methodist Hospital. Dr. Narayanan said he would schedule the colonoscopy and after all of the tests, we would reconvene and discuss the findings.

The surgery center was able to get the colonoscopy in before the tests. Afterwards, when Dr. Narayanan walked out to talk to my husband, I'm not sure who was more surprised between them. There was a precancerous polyp there, and he said it had been there for a while.

We were speechless. The other tests at Methodist were cancelled and we journeyed on the surgery pathway.

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He said we would have been in a whole different scenario if I had waited 6 months, much less another year.

Are you covered?

Have you contacted your insurance company to find out if they cover screening colonoscopies? If your company doesn't currently offer this test as a benefit, urge them to do so. It could mean the difference between life and death.

Men and Colon Cancer: Increased risk for polyp recurrence



The National Cancer Institute recently reported findings that men who have had a precancerous polyp removed during colonoscopy are 76% more likely to develop new polyps than women. People who are over 65, as well as those who are obese or had more than one polyp removed are also at an increased risk for a recurrence.

In fact, if you have had more than 3 polyps removed initially, the American Cancer Society recommends getting re-tested in 3 years.

If you would like more information on a screening colonoscopy, please contact us at (317) 841-8090, or toll free at (800) 872-5123.



Brownies...with benefits!

Here's a trick for packing your favorite boxed brownie mix with a punch of fiber, and leaving out the extra fat!

These brownies are moist and delicious, but remember—they still contain about 100 calories per bar.

The Recipe

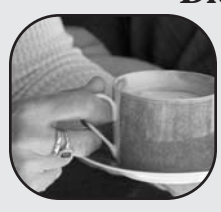
Ingredients: (1) box any commercial prepared brownie mix and (1) 15.5-ounce can black beans

Directions:

1. Open can of beans
2. Place can's contents, including liquid, in blender and blend.
3. Mix pureed beans thoroughly with boxed brownie mix *only*.
4. Place in oiled baking pan and bake according to package.
5. Cool and serve.

Did you know?

Coffee does more than just wake you up!



According to WebMD, recent research shows that compared to not drinking coffee, at least two cups daily can translate to a 25% reduced risk of colon cancer, an 80% drop in liver cirrhosis risk, and nearly half the risk of gallstones.

Your Digestive Health

Should you be eating flaxseed for good health?

First of all, what is it? You may have heard the word tossed around as people have become more interested in improving their diets with natural foods. Actually, flaxseed has been available for thousands of years. It is a member of the grain family, has a nutty texture and is similar in size to a sesame seed. Recently, it has been the subject of press coverage for its health benefits.

Flax contains the vitamins B1, B2, C, E, iron, and zinc. It is also full of protein, healthy fats (omega-3 and omega-6), and fiber. A diet rich in omega-3 is associated with a decreased risk of colon cancer, breast cancer, heart disease and stroke. The fiber found in flax helps regulate the colon, which may help reduce the occurrence of colon cancer. Flax also contains a chemical known as lignin that may help decrease tumor cell growth.

If you are interested in improving your health and decreasing your risk for certain diseases, including colon cancer, flaxseed has some great benefits. Make sure you inform your doctor or health care provider if you are taking flaxseed on a regular basis.

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IT: Do you have any advice or words of encouragement for others who may be undecided about receiving this screening test?

KW: Be persistent in taking care of yourself. I have a family friend that was diagnosed on a routine 50-ish colonoscopy with colon cancer three months before my surgery. Once his surgery was complete, he had stage 4 colon cancer. Also, our neighbor, who is older than me, did present with symptoms and he also has been diagnosed with stage 4 cancer, with liver and lymph node involvement. This was three months after me. I am so happy to say, "Praise the Lord! I had my tests done before my polyp changed."

If you have passed your 50th birthday and have not received a colonoscopy screening, please do so as soon as possible. As Karen's story warns us, a few months can make a big difference. Colon cancer is highly treatable and even *preventable* when polyps are discovered and removed in the early stages of growth. Together, we can work to thwart this deadly disease.



How much do I need?

Two tablespoons of ground flax meal or 1 tablespoon of flax oil per day is recommended. Flax can be added to muffins, yogurt and salads. You can make your own flax meal by grinding flaxseeds with a coffee grinder.