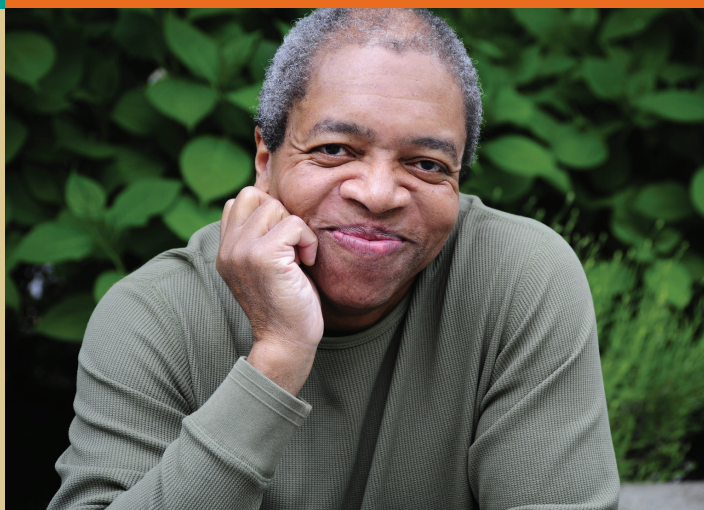




# Project HEAL

*Health through Early Awareness and Learning*



A SPIRITUAL GUIDE  
TO COLORECTAL  
CANCER & SCREENING

*Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers.*

It is through our bodies that we serve God and show our love for others. We can glorify God and be at our best to serve Him if we are strong and healthy. This means taking care of ourselves and getting the checkups that we need. We need to do our part to make sure we live a long, healthy life.

Do you know that people age 45 and over need to be tested for colorectal cancer? Why? Because finding colorectal cancer early can save lives. It is just one of the things needed to keep up a

healthy, working body. You may hear people say, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." This way of thinking is why so many African Americans are dying from colorectal cancer.





The cause of colorectal cancer is not known at this time. This means that anybody can get it. Colorectal cancer is one of those diseases that people can have without showing any symptoms. So don't wait until you start feeling bad to get tested. Now is as good of a time as ever. "An ounce of prevention is better than a pound of cure."

**When was the last time you went to the doctor to get a check-up and you felt fine, nothing was wrong?**

God has given you a choice. You can choose to take charge of your health!

You hear people telling stories all the time about how somebody they knew was going along living fine until one day they went to the doctor and found out they had cancer. Shortly after, that person they knew died. It was not the knowing that killed them, it was not knowing. Most likely they found out they had cancer when it had spread so much that there was little medical help that could be given. But how many times have you heard about someone finding out they had cancer early, had it treated, and are now living a long, healthy life? If everyone age 45 and over would just go in and get tested, they would lower their chances of dying from the cancer.

In this booklet, you will learn about the basics of colorectal cancer, the importance of screening (testing), and information to help you in getting screened. You will also be encouraged to take charge of your health.

*Lead me in thy truth, and teach me.*

We are going to teach you the basics, so that prayerfully, you can and will spread the word as you go about your day “loving your neighbor as yourself.” So let’s begin with the basics.

## ***What Is Cancer?***

Cancer occurs when cells in a part of the body begin to grow out of control. Normal cells divide and grow in an orderly fashion, but cancer cells do not. They keep on growing and crowd out normal cells.

## ***What Is Colorectal Cancer?***

Colorectal cancer is cancer of the colon or the rectum. The colon (also called the large intestine) and the rectum are parts of the digestive system. This is where food is processed to make energy and rid the body of waste.







The cancer occurs in the cells that line the colon or rectum and can lead to growths called polyps. The colon and rectum have a smooth lining made of millions of cells. Changes in these cells can lead to growths in the colon that can become cancerous and should be removed. These growths are called polyps. Over a period of years, polyps can turn cancerous. Taking out polyps early may prevent cancer from ever forming.

## *How Common Is It?*

Colorectal cancer is the third most common cancer found in men and women of all racial and ethnic groups in this country. It mostly affects men and women age 45 years and older.

African Americans are more likely to die from colorectal cancer than any other racial or ethnic group in the U.S. This may be because African Americans are less likely to be tested. African Americans tend to get colorectal cancer at a younger age than Whites and die sooner from colorectal cancer once it is found. These differences may be due to:

- Not seeing a doctor regularly
- Not having colorectal cancer testing regularly
- Eating a diet high in fat, red meat, or processed meat
- Not exercising enough and consistently being overweight
- Using tobacco

*With all thy getting, get understanding.*

## *Who's At Risk?*

The exact cause of most cancers is not known. But there are some things that may raise a person's risk of getting colorectal cancer such as:

**Age:** Being age 45 and older

**Colon polyps:** Already having polyps present in the colon

**Family history:** Having close family members with a history of colorectal cancer

**Personal history of colorectal cancer:** Having already had colorectal cancer or inflammatory bowel disease (colitis or Crohn's disease)

**Diet:** Having a diet high in animal fat and low in calcium and fiber

**Tobacco use:** Smoking cigarettes





## *What Are Some Early Warning Signs?*

You can have colorectal cancer without having any symptoms. But if you or someone you know is having any of these symptoms, you need to see a doctor as soon as you can.

- A change in bowel habits
- Diarrhea, constipation, or feeling that the bowel does not empty completely
- Blood (either bright red or very dark) in the stool
- Thin stools
- General abdominal discomfort (frequent gas pains, bloating, fullness, and/or cramps)
- Weight loss with no reason
- Constant tiredness
- Nausea and vomiting

Most often these symptoms are not from cancer. Other problems can cause the same symptoms. But it is always better to be safe than sorry.

*You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*

## *Fact or Fiction?*

Sometimes having the wrong information can be just as harmful as having no information at all. So let's take a moment to talk about what is true (fact) and what is not (fiction).

**Fiction:** Colon and rectal cancers are rare forms of cancer.

**Fact:** They are quite common. In the United States colorectal cancer is the third most common cancer in men and women; and it is the second leading cause of cancer-related death.





## *John 8:32 [NKJV]*



**Fiction:** If the polyps in the colon are not swollen and painful, they aren't dangerous or cancerous.

**Fact:** This is not true. All polyps found need to be removed or sampled since they might lead to cancer in the future if not removed. Most of these polyps don't produce pain.

**Fiction:** Screening is only needed if you have symptoms.

**Fact:** Many colorectal cancers have little or no symptoms. Without screening, you may never know if what you are feeling is from cancer until the cancer has grown. For example, you could have blood in your stool from a bleeding polyp that cannot be seen by the naked eye. Being able to find and remove polyps before they become cancerous is the purpose of screening.

**Fiction:** Colon cleansing can prevent or cure colorectal cancer.

**Fact:** Colon cleansing is used to empty the colon of undigested waste. There is no scientific proof that colon cleansing can lower the risk of colorectal cancer. Colon cleansing is not a cure for colorectal cancer.

*He reveals deep and secret things.*

## *How Is It Found?*

Screening tests are used to look for colorectal cancer. In many cases, these tests (see table below) can find colorectal cancer at an early stage and greatly improve the chances of a successful treatment. Treatment for colorectal cancer is more likely to be helpful when the disease is found early. Talk to your doctor and start getting tested at age 45.

TEST	HOW IS IT DONE?
Fecal occult blood test (FOBT)	Test checks for blood in stool that you can't see. You get a test kit from your doctor or other health care provider. At home you put a stool sample on a card.
Sigmoidoscopy	Test looks at your rectum and sigmoid colon. During the test, a flexible, lighted tube called a sigmoidoscope is inserted into your rectum.
Colonoscopy	Test lets your doctor view the inside of the rectum and entire colon using a long, flexible tube called a colonoscope. Your doctor may remove polyps that may be found.
Double-contrast barium enema (DCBE)	Test lets your doctor view the entire colon and rectum using x-rays. A soft tube is placed into your rectum. The tube is used to fill the colon with liquid barium. This liquid makes the colon show up clear on x-rays.

*Daniel 2:22a [NKJV]*



*For God has not given us a  
spirit of fear, but of power, and of  
love, and of a sound mind.  
II Timothy 1:7 [NKJV]*

## *Can Colorectal Cancer Be Prevented?*

Even though the specific cause of colorectal cancer is unknown, there are some things that you can do to lower your risk of colorectal cancer, such as:

- **Get screened:** Early screening (testing) can find polyps and remove them before they have a chance to become cancerous
- **Healthy eating and exercise:** Eating healthy and being physically active can lower your risk of colorectal cancer. Eat plenty of fruits, vegetables, and whole grain foods. Limit intake of high fat foods. Exercise regularly.

*This sickness is not unto death.*

## ***What Might Keep You From Getting Screened?***

Many people are afraid of having “The Big C.” The power of fear can be so strong that it grips you. It can paralyze you if you let it and not allow you to do the things that you know you need to. But we know that fear is not a spirit given to us by God, and that we have the power to overcome fear. It’s normal to feel anxious or fearful about getting tested for colorectal cancer. But remember, you talk to God every day. He is with you through thick and thin. Your strong faith has gotten you through life’s challenges and it will get you through the test for colorectal cancer too.





## *John 11:4 [NKJV]*



When it comes to your health, you know that God will heal you through the doctors when you are sick. But you also have to do your part—your part in preventing colorectal cancer means getting screened according to the guidelines. Whether you have symptoms or not, if you are 45 years or older, you need to be tested for colorectal cancer. If you are at increased or high risk for colorectal cancer, colonoscopies should begin before age 45. In many cases, these screening tests can find colorectal cancers at an early stage and greatly improve the chances of a successful treatment. Treatment for colorectal cancer is more likely to be helpful when the disease is found early. Talk to your doctor and start getting tested now. Don't let fear, pride, or shame keep you from doing so. This is something that we all must do.

No one wants to find out they have cancer. And most of us dread going to the doctor, especially the brothers. So you are not alone. Look at this as just another milestone along the path of life. Don't let fear stop you from getting checked.

## *So What Comes After The Screening?*

You may be wondering what will happen if you have the test done and the doctor finds out that you have cancer. Well, the answer is, you keep living. Colorectal cancer is not a death sentence. As the Bible says in John 11:4 [NKJV], "This sickness is not unto death."

The quality and length of your life will depend on the stage of cancer, the treatment, and other factors. We know that when things get tough we can put them in God's hands.

*I can do all things through Christ  
which strengtheneth me.*

## *How Can You Take Charge Of Your Health?*

Being a good steward over your health and body that God has given you is important. Your body and your life has purpose and should be valued and preserved. There are a few things you can do to make sure you are making every effort to do so. They are:

- 1. Make a conscious choice to live.*
- 2. Eat a healthy diet—Eat at least 5 servings of fruits and vegetables every day and limit the amount of high fat foods you eat.*
- 3. Be active—Do some kind of physical activity (ex. walking, lift weights, etc) at least 30 minutes, on 5 or more days of the week.*
- 4. Get regular check-ups—as suggested by your doctor.*
- 5. Get screened for colorectal cancer.*

*Or do you not know that your body  
is the temple of the Holy Spirit or who  
is in you, whom you have from  
God, and you are not your own?  
I Corinthians 6:19 [NKJV]*

## Philippians 4:13 [KJV]

my God shall  
all your needs  
ing to His riches  
by Christ Jesu..  
Philippians 4:19



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"Colorectal Cancer." American Cancer Society. Web. 07 Feb. 2017. <http://www.cancer.org/cancer/colon-rectal-cancer.html>

U.S. Food and Drug Administration FDA Consumer Health Information. "Colorectal Cancer: What You Should Know." 2015. PDF File.



*He reveals deep and secret things.*

## ***Will Your Insurance Company Pay For The Screening?***

Colorectal cancer screening is so important that most insurance companies cover it.

### **If you have Medicare:**

Your colorectal cancer screening should be covered.

Call 1-800-633-4227 to find out for sure.

### **If you have Medicaid:**

Your colorectal cancer screening should be covered.

Call 1-877-267-2323 to find out for sure.

### **For free or low cost colorectal cancer screenings:**

- *Maryland Residents:* The Maryland Colorectal Cancer Control Program offers free screening for eligible Maryland residents.
  - Prince George's County residents call (301) 552-7705
  - Baltimore City residents call: (410) 328-4673
  - Other Maryland residents: (800) 477-9774
  - Or visit [http://phpa.dhmh.maryland.gov/cancer/Pages/crf\\_cpest.aspx](http://phpa.dhmh.maryland.gov/cancer/Pages/crf_cpest.aspx)
- *Maryland, Virginia, and Washington, D.C. Residents:*
  - Visit <http://cancer.howard.edu/patients/screening.htm>



*Daniel 2:22a [NKJV]*



## Notes

[illegible]

**If you are age 50 or older or think you may be at a higher than average risk for colorectal cancer, talk with your doctor about getting screened.**

## *What Questions Do You Need To Ask Your Doctor?*

Here are some questions that you may want to ask your doctor when talking about colorectal cancer screening. You may also bring these questions with you and use them as a guide when at your next doctor appointment.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Doctor Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**What is colorectal cancer?**

**Do I need to be tested? Why?**

**At what age do I start getting tested?**

**How often will I need to be screened?**

**Who will do the exam?**

**What is the screening test you recommend? Why?**

**What's involved in screening?**

**How do I prepare for the screening?**

**How long does the test take?**



*Seek and ye shall find.*

*Matthew 7:7b [KJV]*

**Can I return to work after the test?**

**Can I drive after the test?**

**Will the test be uncomfortable or painful?**

**Is there any risk involved?**

**When will I get the results?**

**What if you find something? Will I need more tests?**

**If I have a family history of colorectal cancer or polyps, do I need to be tested before I am 50 or more often than other people?**

**Will my insurance cover the screening?**

**How much will my screening cost?**

*\* Adapted from the CDC*



## SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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