

Preventative Care

Seacoast Gastroenterology offers several different screening procedures that can help identify health issues before they develop into more serious problems. Preventative care is part of our commitment to the long-term health of our patients.

Colon Cancer Screening

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Colon cancer is a disease which is preventable, treatable, and beatable if diagnosed in its earliest, most curable stages. Thanks to advances in colonoscopy technology and an increase in the number of people requesting and receiving the procedure, national colorectal cancer rates are dropping dramatically.

Men and women at average risk should begin regular screening at age 50, 45 for African Americans. For people at greater risk, beginning regular colorectal cancer screenings at an earlier age is recommended.

Those who are at increased risk for colorectal cancers include:

- Men and women who are 50 and older; 45 and older for African Americans
- People with a personal or family history of colorectal cancer or benign (not cancerous) colorectal polyps
- People with a family history of inherited colorectal cancer
- People who use tobacco
- People who are obese and/or sedentary
- People who have Crohn's Disease or Ulcerative Colitis

If there is a personal or family history of colorectal cancer; benign colorectal polyps; inflammatory bowel disease; or breast, ovarian or endometrial cancer; earlier and more frequent screening may be necessary.

Colon cancer doesn't discriminate between gender or race. In the United States, one out of every eighteen women will develop colorectal cancer. It's the third most common cancer in American women after lung and breast cancers. But when diagnosed early, 90 percent of colorectal cancers are completely curable.

During a colonoscopy, we gently insert a flexible tube with a tiny video camera on the end (colonoscope) into the rectum

and up through the colon.

With the colonoscope, we can examine the entire area where colorectal cancer can occur: from the end of the rectum to the beginning of the colon. We can easily guide the colonoscope, take tissue samples, and even remove small tumors and polyps-painlessly. We generally administer a light sedative to relax you during the procedure.

Barrett's Esophagus Screening

Barrett's esophagus is a precancerous condition often associated with chronic heartburn or acid reflux. For people with Barrett's esophagus, the condition can be more than uncomfortable; it can develop into esophageal cancer-a disease that affects approximately two million Americans.

Fortunately, screening for Barrett's esophagus is relatively simple and painless. We perform an upper endoscopy in which a lighted, flexible tube (endoscope) with a camera on its tip is inserted through your mouth and into your esophagus and stomach. We generally administer a light sedative to relax you during the procedure.

Depending on the location and severity of the condition, we recommend patients undergo repeat endoscopies for surveillance measures. Regular screenings allow physicians to monitor for esophageal inflammation and prevent development of esophageal cancer.