

Start Spreading the News, Get Your Cancer Screening Today



Furthermore, during this time, Mark also was driven to champion the importance of early detection of colorectal cancer through screening colonoscopy. "After all, that test helped to save my life," he says.

Mark had been working at a construction site a few months ago when he happened to run into his family doctor. "Since we bumped into each other by chance, I figured I'd take the opportunity to tell him about some symptoms I'd been experiencing," recalls Mark. Because his job requires a lot of heavy lifting, Mark suspected the blood in his stool was the result of hemorrhoids, which are common in his profession.

To help pinpoint the cause of Mark's symptoms, his physician ordered a colonoscopy (a test involving a thin, flexible tube to examine the inner lining of the colon). At 47, Mark was three years shy of the age the American Cancer Society recommends for screening colonoscopy. His test revealed a rectal polyp (an abnormal growth in the lining of the rectum, which is part of the large intestine). Most polyps are noncancerous and can be removed during a colonoscopy. Mark's polyp was too large to be removed during his procedure, so the doctor took a tissue sample for biopsy (study under a microscope).

"I was petrified, when the doctor (Wayne H. Pinover, DO, radiation oncologist) confirmed I had rectal cancer," says Mark, "but in the same breath, he told me my cancer could be cured because they caught it early. I'm going to be okay." Thanks to the colonoscopy, doctors detected Mark's large, invasive tumor in an early stage, before it had spread to the lymph nodes or other parts of the body.

After being diagnosed, Mark had consultations with Oncologist Willard G. Andrews, III, MD, and

Surgeon D. Mark Zebley, MD. Both specialists recommended that Mark consider participating in a clinical trial being conducted at Abington Health's Center for Clinical Research. "Through clinical trials, we hope to find and prove the effectiveness of new treatments for cancer, and also focus on how to improve the patient's wellbeing and quality of life while undergoing treatment," explains Kelly Pressler, RN, nurse navigator, Rosenfeld Cancer Center.

Abington Health surgeons perform the most colorectal operations in the Delaware Valley.

In Mark's study, researchers hope to learn whether or not chemotherapy alone in patients who must undergo surgery for rectal cancer, will be as effective as the current standard treatment, which combines chemotherapy with radiation. "Mark is a great candidate for this clinical trial," says Dr. Andrews. "He meets all the criteria, he's young and otherwise healthy, and he has a great attitude."

"It's a win-win situation for me," says Mark. "Either way, I'd have to have chemotherapy and surgery, so if they can shrink my tumor without having to use radiation as well, it's a bonus. Plus they can use the information they collect to help other cancer patients."

Helping others continues to be among Mark's top priorities. "Nobody wants to hear the word colonoscopy because it makes them uncomfortable," says Mark. "I'm spreading the news any way I can in our local community. Get your screening colonoscopy at age 50. The test isn't a big deal and it might just save your life. It saved mine."



Mark McKee

Get Your Screening Colonoscopy Today

In 2012, 50,000 Americans died from colon cancer – the third leading cause of cancer deaths in the nation. The good news is that most of these deaths are preventable through screening, early detection and treatment.

Because colorectal cancer does not have symptoms in its early stages, screening is an important tool. Colonoscopy is a screening method that examines the entire colon for precancerous or cancerous growths. With this test, physicians can identify changes before they become cancerous or detect the disease in its early stages when it is most curable.



The American Cancer Society recommends screening colonoscopy beginning at age 50 for men and women at average risk for developing colon cancer. When diagnosed early, 90 percent of colorectal cancers can be cured completely.

For information about scheduling an appointment with a gastroenterologist or colorectal surgeon regarding a colonoscopy, please call our physician referral service, 215-481-MEDI (6334).



SEMINARS • WORKSHOPS

Journey to Survivorship - FREE

Join us as we celebrate the strength and courage of those living with cancer or a history of cancer. Our guest speaker, Sean Swarner, will share his journey of surviving two deadly and different unrelated forms of cancer diagnosed in his teen years. He is the first cancer survivor to stand on top of the world...by climbing Mt. Everest. Event also includes a health fair, labyrinth to honor the journey, and brunch will be provided.

DATE: Sunday, June 1
TIME: 11 AM to 2 PM
LOCATION: Abington Memorial Hospital Lenfest Pavilion, Frobese Conference Center, Auditorium
TO REGISTER: 215-481-2204 or www.abingtonhealth.org



 **Abington Health**
Rosenfeld Cancer Center