

## March is Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month

### The Importance of Colonoscopy Screening

Cancer of the colon and rectum is called colorectal cancer. The colon and rectum are part of the large intestine. Colon polyps can be a sign of colorectal cancer and can be detected during a colonoscopy.

A colonoscopy is a diagnostic procedure used to identify colon polyps. During a colonoscopy, the patient is sedated so that the doctor can view the large intestine using a fiber-optic camera. Colon polyps can be identified, and immediately removed and biopsied, which lowers the risk for developing colorectal cancer and can improve the patient's prognosis if the cancer is identified early.

The risk for developing colorectal cancer increases at age 40 and peaks between the ages of 60 and 75. People over age 50 should have a colonoscopy screening, which makes earlier diagnosis and treatment possible. Those with a family history of colon cancer or colon polyps may need to be screened at an earlier age.

Colon cancer usually begins as a button-like growth, called a colon polyp, on the surface of the intestinal lining. A colon polyp can develop in the large intestine or rectum. Colon polyps can be cancerous (malignant) or non-cancerous (benign).

Colorectal cancer grows slowly and does not cause symptoms for a long time. As colon cancer develops, it can invade the wall of the intestine or rectum and spread to the lymph nodes and liver. The most common first symptom of rectal cancer is bleeding during bowel movements. Fatigue, weakness, and persistent constipation are also symptoms of colorectal cancer.

#### Call your health care provider if you have

- Black, tar-like stools
- Blood during a bowel movement
- Change in bowel habits

#### The following is recommended to reduce the risk of developing polyps

- Eat a diet low in fat and high in fruits, vegetables, and fiber
- Avoid smoking and excessive alcohol intake
- Maintain a normal body weight

*From MerckSource*

#### Who performs a colonoscopy? A Gastroenterologist

Gastroenterologists are medical doctors who specialize in the study of the digestive tract, including the esophagus, stomach, small intestine, colon, rectum, gallbladder, pancreas, liver and bile ducts.

Meet PMSI's gastroenterologists located at 1591 Medical Drive, Pottstown, PA:

- Deborah E. Fleischer, M.D.
- Burhan Hameed, M.D.
- Michael Pawlowsky, D.O.
- Drew Ronnermann, M.D.

To schedule an appointment, please call (610) 326-8005.

# In a new partnership, MerckEngage.com gives you health tools with just a click

Free health support programs that offer a range of resources covering nutrition, physical activities, and treatment plan help are now available to Pottstown Medical Specialists Inc. (PMSI) patients, thanks to a new partnership forged between the practice and MerckEngage.com.



MerckEngage.com is a website sponsored by Merck Pharmaceuticals, the company that makes medications you may use regularly. It provides a convenient, easy, and no-cost way for PMSI patients to keep up-to-date on health topics, receive education and tips between office visits, and take advantage of easy-to-use

tools that can keep their healthy lifestyles on track. It supplies step-by-step guidance on things like meal planning (see recipe below).

It offers prescription savings cards for eligible patients taking certain Merck medications. And patients can talk one-on-one with a health coach ... all at no charge!

Here at PMSI, we do hope you're getting some form of regular exercise. Even a little is better than none! For those who are exercise beginners, as well as those who are veteran exercise buffs, MerckEngage.com lets PMSI patients access an activity planning tool that could make a difference in how you feel about, and what benefits you're getting from, an exercise routine.

If you're following a treatment plan suggested by a PMSI physician, MerckEngage.com supplies a simple tracking tool that lets you monitor your health condition on your own, as well as share progress updates with PMSI staff members at our various offices in Bally, Boyertown, Collegeville, Pottstown, Phoenixville, Royersford, and Stowe.

The next time you visit a PMSI office, ask your physician or a staff member about how you can take advantage of all MerckEngage.com has to offer.



***New, and created  
with you in mind!***

Welcome to PMSI's patient newsletter. You can look forward to monthly editions with tips to improve your health. Visit our website, **pmsiforlife.com**, for archived issues.

## Types of Fiber: Soluble Fiber and Insoluble Fiber

There are two different types of fiber -- soluble and insoluble. Both are important for health, digestion, and preventing diseases.

- **Soluble fiber** attracts water and turns to gel during digestion. This slows digestion. Soluble fiber is found in oat bran, barley, nuts, seeds, beans, lentils, peas, and some fruits and vegetables. Soluble fiber may help lower cholesterol, which can help prevent heart disease.
- **Insoluble fiber** is found in foods such as wheat bran, vegetables, and whole grains. It adds bulk to the stool and appears to help food pass more quickly through the stomach and intestines to promote regular bowel movement and prevent constipation.

## Three-Bean Salad

### Ingredients

- 1 cup fresh green beans, cut into 1-inch lengths
- 1 cup water
- $\frac{1}{3}$  (15-oz) can low-sodium garbanzo beans, drained and rinsed
- $\frac{1}{3}$  (15-oz) can low-sodium kidney beans, drained and rinsed
- 2 tbsp thinly sliced red onion
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup sliced red bell pepper
- 2 tsp olive oil
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup red wine vinegar
- 2 tsp sugar
- 1 tsp salt-free Mrs. Dash†  
Lemon Pepper Seasoning



### Directions

- In a small saucepan, bring the green beans and water to a boil.
- Cover. Reduce heat to simmer and cook for 4 to 5 minutes or until tender.
- Drain and rinse with cold water.
- In a large bowl combine the green beans, garbanzo beans, kidney beans, onion, and pepper.
- In a small bowl combine the olive oil, vinegar, sugar, and salt-free seasoning.
- Add the dressing to the bean mixture and mix well.

**Makes 4 servings**

**Calories 107**

Total Fat 3g

Cholesterol 0mg

Sodium 70mg

Protein 5g

Total Carbohydrates 17g

Dietary Fiber 3g