

## **K-State expert offers tips on reducing the risk of developing cancer**

June is National Men's Health Month

The old saying "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure," coined by Benjamin Franklin in 1736 still holds true today when talking about men's health and cancer prevention.

Speaking about three of the most common cancers in men — prostate, testicular and colorectal — K-State Research and Extension family and consumer sciences agent Holly Miner said the key to reducing risk is early detection through screening.

"Early detection increases the treatment options and may decrease the spread of cancer to other areas of the body," Miner said.

Of the three common cancers in men, Miner said prostate cancer is the most common in American men, after skin cancer.

"If your father or brother had prostate cancer, you are more likely to develop it," Miner said. "A diet high in fat also increases the risk."

She said screening is recommended for men ages 55-69 and can be done with a blood test.

"Research has also shown that men over the age of 70 should consult with their healthcare professional for screening recommendations," Miner said.

Testicular cancer is another uniquely male problem. Miner said this disease typically occurs in men 20-35 years old, but has a low chance of occurrence, approximately .0004%.

"A family history of testicular cancer, men with HIV and white men have a great risk for this cancer compared to other ethnicities," Miner said. She added that men who did not have a testicle drop down at birth or within the first year of life, as well as men who have had cancer in one testicle, are also at a greater risk.

Screening for this can be done at home monthly by feeling for a lump in the testicle. Any changes in the scrotum should be reported to a medical professional, Miner said.

A cancer that afflicts men and women alike is colorectal cancer, which Miner said is the third most frequently diagnosed cancer in the U.S. and accounts for 9% of all cancer-related deaths.

"If detected early, colorectal cancer can be prevented or treated without death occurring," Miner said.

Risk factors for colorectal cancer include age, personal or family history of this cancer, being obese, excessive alcohol or tobacco use or being of African American descent, according to Miner.

There are several screening options, including an annual fecal occult blood test, colonoscopy, virtual colonoscopy via X-Rays, and DNA stool test.

"Because there are so many different types of screenings for colon cancer, the best thing to do is consult with your health care professional to figure out which one is the best for you," Miner said.

With all cancers, a healthy diet is key in risk reduction. Miner offered these tips:

- Eat nutrient-dense foods.
- Consume a variety of vegetables, including those that are dark green, red/orange, beans, peas and lentils.
- Select whole fruits, frozen or canned fruits packed in juice or water (not syrup).
- Make sure grain products are at least half whole grains.
- Choose fat-free or low-fat dairy products and/or lactose-free versions and fortified soy beverages.
- Select lean protein foods and protein alternatives.
- Limit saturated fats by selected unsaturated oils and foods.
- Reduce sodium intake.
- Drink alcohol in moderation and reduce foods with high or added sugars.

"Your health is important. Taking steps to prevent, detect and care for yourself now will lead to a healthier and more fulfilling life," Miner said.