

TEXAS C-STEP Newsletter

Colon Cancer Screening, Training, Education & Prevention

Texas A&M Health Science Center

6/1/2013

Year 2, Quarter 3

Texas C-STEP in the Communities

The Colon Cancer Screening, Training, Education and Prevention Program, or Texas C-STEP, is a screening and prevention program jointly operated by the Texas A&M Physicians Family Medicine Residency program and the Texas A&M Health Science Center School of Rural Public Health. The project, now in its second year, is a grant funded by the Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas.

C-STEP seeks to reduce colorectal cancer screening disparities by providing free or subsidized colonoscopies to uninsured or underinsured residents of the Brazos Valley. In order to achieve this objective, unique partnerships have been established in both urban and rural areas of the 7-county region. Community health workers (CHWs), trained by C-STEP, visit clinics and providers in the counties to promote referrals and raise awareness of the project. The CHWs are also available to conduct one-on-one visits with patients in the rural counties to reduce travel time and cost for patients needing preliminary information about colonoscopy. The team has been involved in dozens of health fairs and community events.

C-STEP involved kids in colon cancer prevention awareness during the Leon County health fair in February, in which students from the sixth, seventh and eighth grade received information on the importance of colonoscopy screening. CHWs interacted with more than 250 kids – who were enthusiastic about taking home information to loved ones age 50 and older. C-STEP also participated in the Happy Healthy Kids Fair in Bryan, once again utilizing an opportunity to reach out to parents and grandparents in the target age group.

C-STEP personnel are available to speak at club meetings, corporate seminars, to church groups, at senior centers, or anywhere information about colon cancer prevention is deemed appropriate. Please visit our website at www.texascstep.org for more information.

Pictured at right: C-STEP community health workers with Happy Healthy Kids Fair organizer Sara Mendez.

C-STEP is Coming to a County Near You!

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Meet with a community health worker to discuss your risk for colorectal cancer:

◎ Grimes County (Navasota)
June 5, 2013

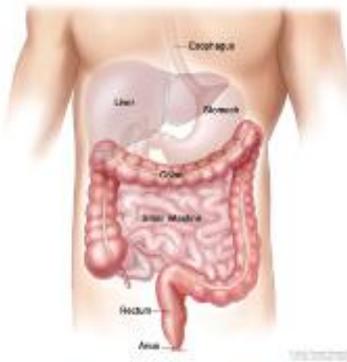
◎ Brazos County (Bryan)
June 20, 2013

◎ Grimes County
August 2013

◎ Brazos County (Bryan)
August 17, 2013

For details, please call Chi-Chi Ojinnaka @ (979) 862-4993.





Keeping your Colon Healthy

The colon, also known as the large intestine, is the unofficial ugly duckling of our anatomy. Not a lot of people like to talk about this particular part of their anatomy, and rightly so. The colon can produce gas at all the wrong moments, make loud rumbling noises, and be the source of much embarrassment.

But the colon plays an essential role in our digestion – contributing greatly to our overall health and well-being. When the colon is healthy, you just *feel* better.

As the tail end of a 26-ft long digestive system, the colon receives food that has already been broken down both physically and chemically – in the mouth, esophagus, stomach, and first part of the small intestine. Nutrients from the watery gruel being transported through the small intestine are absorbed into the bloodstream to be converted at the cellular level into energy. In the large intestine, water is absorbed back into the bloodstream, leaving a semi-solid mass which collects in the rectum, the last 7 inches of the colon.

There are a number of tips for keeping your colon healthy and functioning optimally. It is important to drink plenty of water, eat products with fiber (like fruits, vegetables and coarse grains), limit your intake of red meat and processed meats, and exercise regularly. Using tobacco or having an unhealthy weight are frequent contributors to colon cancer.

When cancer is found in the colon or rectum, it is usually the result of polyps (i.e., abnormal cell growths) that have languished in the colon for years before becoming cancerous. A procedure called colonoscopy enables a physician to both view and remove polyps, even before they become cancerous.

The recommended age to have a colonoscopy is 50, younger if you or one of your immediate family members has a history of polyps or colorectal cancer. The Centers for Disease Control estimates that if everyone who is 50 years old or older had a colonoscopy regularly, deaths related to colorectal cancer could be decreased by at least 60% (Centers for Disease Control, 2013, <http://www.cdc.gov/features/colorectalawareness/>).

For many people, the most significant barrier to having a colonoscopy is cost. It is an expensive procedure and, even with insurance, deductibles may be several hundred dollars. Other reported barriers to colonoscopy include transportation, fear of finding cancer, and lack of awareness about the importance of colonoscopy in preventing colorectal cancers.

The Colon Cancer Screening, Training, Education and Prevention program (Texas C-STEP) provides colonoscopies to residents of the 7-county Brazos Valley who are uninsured or underinsured, through a grant to the Texas A&M Health Science Center Family Medicine Residency, located at 2900 E. 29th Street in Bryan, Texas. To speak to a community health worker about whether you qualify for this financial assistance, or to schedule an appointment, please call Brenda at 979-436-0449. *Se habla Español.*

Tips for reducing colorectal cancer risks ...

- Ⓞ **Increase the fiber content of your diet**
- Ⓞ **Drink at least eight 8-ounce glasses of water daily**
- Ⓞ **Reduce intake of red meat or processed meat**
- Ⓞ **Avoid tobacco**
- Ⓞ **Reduce alcohol intake**
- Ⓞ **Exercise regularly**

MEET OUR Community Health Workers



Nola Eugene is one of the volunteer community health workers for the C-STEP program.

She participates in health fairs held around the Brazos Valley, where she interacts with fair participants to assess their risk for colon cancer. Nola enjoys educating people about prevention of colorectal cancer, the importance of screening exams, and the opportunity to qualify for a free colonoscopy at the Texas A&M Physicians Family Medicine Center in Bryan.

Originally from the island of St. Lucia, Nola's initial exposure to health care was in 2009, which led her to become certified as a peer-educator on sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS.

During her free time she engages in volunteer activities including mentoring children at the Hearne Boys and Girls Club through the Community Health Promotion Students' Organization, volunteering at Project Unity's Safe Harbor Program, participating in the 2013 Brazos Valley Health Assessment, and teaching chronic disease and diabetes self-management classes with the Area Agency on Aging and Healthy Aging Program.

Brenda Hernandez is another one of the community health workers



for the C-STEP program. Brenda works full-time in the Texas A&M Physicians

Family Medicine Center and interacts with almost all of the C-STEP clients receiving colonoscopy. She is from Bryan, Texas, and is fluent in Spanish.

Brenda's responsibilities include serving as a bridge between clinical staff and patients and providing navigation assistance to patients seeking a colonoscopy. She is involved in clinical outreach, visiting clinics in rural counties to inform them about our program.

Brenda enjoys the rewarding feeling of "knowing I am helping someone in my community." During her spare time, she enjoys spending time with family and friends, baking, crafts, and volunteering for a worthy cause.

As a volunteer community health worker (Promotor) for C-STEP



Augusto Sarría is involved in raising awareness about colorectal cancer. He

has educated hundreds of people in the community on colorectal cancer prevention and screening

during community events. He has also been involved in creating awareness of the C-STEP program on Radio Alegria, radio programs serving the Hispanic community in the Brazos Valley.

Augusto enjoys being able to "make a difference in people's lives" and being part of a team that is working to prevent colon cancer. Originally trained as a physician in Columbia, Augusto has been involved in healthcare for 20 years.

During his free time, he volunteers at Bridge Ministries' free clinic, every 1st and 3rd Tuesday. Augusto is also the pastor for Hispanic Ministries at the First United Methodist Church in Bryan, Texas.



Spotlight on Our Partners

The School of Rural Public Health assists the Texas A&M Physicians Family Medicine Residency with the C-STEP program. As the arm responsible for community outreach, SRPH increases awareness of the program to uninsured and underinsured residents. This is made possible by the community health workers who spread the news through media outlets and participation in health fairs. SRPH will also evaluate the impact of the program and identify barriers and facilitators to colonoscopy utilization among low-income residents of the seven counties.

Visit Our Website

<http://texascstep.org/>

General Information

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Referrals/Appointments

Brenda Hernandez
Texas A&M Physicians Family Medicine Center
2900 East 29th Street
Bryan, TX 77802
(979) 436-0449
www.texasamphysicians.com



Helpful Resources on Colorectal Cancer

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American Cancer Institute
www.cancer.org/cancer/colorectalrectumcancer/index

Fred Hutchison Cancer
Research Center
<http://www.fhcrc.org/en/diseases/colorectal-cancer.html>

Centers for Disease
Control
<http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/colorectal/>

National Cancer Institute
<http://www.cancer.gov/cancer-topics/types/colon-and-rectal>

Prevent Cancer
Foundation
<http://preventcancer.org/prevention/preventable-cancers/colorectal-cancer/colorectal-cancer-resources/>

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