

*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*

## Colon Cancer: What you can do to reduce your risk

EVANSTON, IL – The death last week of evangelist Tammy Faye Messner has put colon cancer back in the news. First diagnosed in 1996, Messner and her former husband, Jim Bakker, became the country's most renowned televangelists in the 1970's, until sex and fraud scandals took down their empire and sent him to prison. Messner was 65.

Over seventy-five percent of colon cancer patients seem to have no inherited risk. However, research strongly suggests there are diet and lifestyle changes that can help reduce your risk of developing colon cancer.

Keith I. Block, MD, medical director of the Block Center for Integrative Cancer Treatment in Evanston, Illinois, offers the following tips to help reduce your risk of developing this disease:

1. Receive regular colorectal cancer screenings beginning at age 50, assuming you have no known risk factors for the disease. If you are at higher risk – due to a family history of colon cancer, inflammatory bowel disease, or if you have a history of polyps in the colon – talk to your doctor about getting screened before the age of 50.
2. Eat a diet rich in fiber, complex carbohydrates, fruits, vegetables and plant sources of protein. Be sure to include plenty of cruciferous vegetables, as they have been shown to block the growth of colon cancer tumors. Cruciferous vegetables include: arugula, broccoli, brussel sprouts, cabbage, kale, cauliflower, bok choy, turnip greens and mustard greens.
3. Reduce, or better still, eliminate red meat from your diet. Information coming out of countries with the highest levels of beef consumption, such as New Zealand and Scotland, also have among the highest colon cancer rates in the world. In addition, a large Harvard study of 80,000 nurses, reported in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, found that eating any kind of red meat on a daily basis resulted in a threefold increased risk of colon cancer.
4. Reduce saturated fat intake. Studies suggest that saturated fat, found in fatty meat and high fat dairy products, including ice cream, milk and cheese, may trigger increased production of insulin and growth factors that seem to promote colon tumor growth. In contrast, diets high in omega-3 fats found in fish such as salmon, albacore tuna and rainbow trout can decrease inflammation that may lead to colon cancer.
5. Maintain a healthy weight and body composition. Excess weight is strongly linked to colon cancer, especially for men, premenopausal women, and those with excess fat predominantly in the abdomen. Since muscle weighs more than fat, recognize that healthy exercise that builds muscle while burning fat, may not change the scale, but it will still reduce your risk.

6. Incorporate physical activity into your life. Regular moderate activity such as brisk walking for 30 to 60 minutes a day doesn't just help with weight control, it can result in changes in various hormones and growth factors that help reduce the risk of colon cancer.

7. Don't smoke, or quit smoking, and only drink alcohol in moderation.

8. Increase your antioxidants through a colorful selection of vegetables and fruits and reduce inflammation with cherries, fish and fish oil, and tumeric or its powerful anti-inflammatory component curcumin.

9. Research has consistently demonstrated that men and women with high blood levels of vitamin D, as well as those who consume more of the vitamin from dietary sources, have a significantly reduced risk of colorectal cancer. In addition, there is solid data suggesting that calcium supplementation can lower colon cancer risk.

10. Getting the right flora from probiotics like acidophilus can not only reduce your risk of getting colon cancer, but the risk of recurrence as well.

According to the Colon Cancer Alliance, colorectal cancers (cancer of either the rectum or colon) is the third most commonly diagnosed cancer in the United States, and the second leading cause of cancer deaths. Appropriate screening is extremely important, as the survival rate for people with colorectal cancers found early is more than 90 percent. Statistics from the American Cancer Society estimate that in 1997, there will be 153,760 new cases of colorectal cancer diagnosed. Meaning, someone from this country is diagnosed with this disease every 4 minutes. Approximately 52,180 people in the US will die from colon cancer in 2007.

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The Block Center for Integrative Cancer Treatment, located in Evanston, Illinois, was founded in 1980 by Penny and Keith Block, MD. The Center's research-based treatment integrates an innovative approach to the best of conventional medicine with scientifically sound complementary therapies – therapeutic nutrition, botanical and phytonutrient supplementation, prescriptive exercise, and systematic mind-body strategies – to enhance the recovery process.

Dr. Block is Director of Integrative Medical Education at the College of Medicine at the University of Illinois, Chicago, and a member of the National Cancer Institute's PDQ Cancer Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM) Editorial Board in Bethesda, MD. The Block Center regularly participates in industry-sponsored clinical trials of new drugs, large-scale drug monitoring studies, and research on medical communication and patient perception. The Center's research staff has participated in laboratory and clinical research projects with investigators from a number of universities and clinical centers, including the University of Illinois at Chicago, Bar-Ilan University in Israel, M.D. Anderson Cancer Center, and the Karolinska Institute in Stockholm. The Block Center is currently the only private North American medical center using chronomodulated chemotherapy.