

Colon Cancer and Young People: Trust Your Gut (*Interview Transcripts*)

Dr. Michael Hurtuk, Colorectal Surgeon, OSF HealthCare

“I think there is a misconception that when you are young, your risk of colon cancer is smaller. What ends up happening is a lot of people just discredit it as something they ate or needing to be on a better diet or other issues that have been going on. But when you talk to these people who have had colon cancer who are younger, they typically have been having these symptoms for some time.” (:25)

Dr. M. Bassel Atassi, Hematologist/Oncologist, OSF HealthCare

“The symptoms for colon cancer are not different in young adults than compared to older adults. Symptoms that we see include rectal and lower GI bleeding, blood with bowel movements, weight loss, low appetite, abdominal pain, and so forth.” (:18)

Dr. Michael Hurtuk, Colorectal Surgeon, OSF HealthCare

“It is a very broad spectrum of symptoms you worry about with colon cancer. But once these things are progressing, you need to be concerned about it. If your mind tells you I need to get this checked out, then you probably need to get it checked out.” (:16)

Dr. M. Bassel Atassi, Hematologist/Oncologist, OSF HealthCare

“One of the very important criteria that we look for when we see young adults with colon cancer is if they have a family history. About 35% of young adults with colon cancer do have history of colon cancer in other family members who also were diagnosed at a young age.” (:17)

Dr. Michael Hurtuk, Colorectal Surgeon, OSF HealthCare

“Be honest with yourself and pay close attention to your body. If you are having bleeding and you’re young, don’t just assume it is hemorrhoids. Make sure that your primary care doctor works it up – or see somebody and talk to them about it and get it worked up. Don’t just come up with the explanation that it’s just constipation.” (:23)