

Script – Broadcast – A rise in cancer in people under 50

INTRO

There's a misperception that cancer mostly impacts older people. Not so. Cancer is on the rise in people 50 and under.

There are many reasons for the spike, especially lifestyle factors starting early in life and adulthood which are likely to increase the risk of cancer. Factors include poor diets, sedentary lifestyles, and obesity.

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The rise isn't limited to just one type of cancer. Since 1990, there has been a significant increase in cancers of the breast, colon, esophagus, kidney, liver, and pancreas around the world.

For example, according to the American Cancer Society, the rate of people diagnosed with colorectal cancer in the U.S. is dropping in those 65 and older but increasing in younger people.

Deborah Oyelowo (Oy-Yay-Low-Woe) is a family nurse practitioner who specializes in hematology/oncology for OSF HealthCare. She points to the lack of screening, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, when some patients were reluctant to schedule appointments.

(((SOT)))

Deborah Oyelowo (Oy-Yay-Low-Woe) Family Nurse Practitioner, OSF HealthCare

"This is a downside of what happened with COVID. A lot of patients did not get the time and the appointments to have an actual one-on-one with their providers for screenings. Younger people do not know exactly what to look for. By the time the symptoms show up, it's reached a progressive stage. And they don't believe that cancer can exist in the younger population, but unfortunately it does." (:37)

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Oyelowo says prevention is the best medicine. She encourages people of any age to make lifestyle changes including a diet that includes more fruits and vegetables and less saturated fat, red meat, processed foods, and sugar, exercising regularly, and avoiding alcohol and tobacco.

She adds that it's important to know your family history and to establish with a provider if you don't already have one.