

Health Pulse

magazine



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HCOWAA: Advancing Healthcare Standards in West Africa

The Health Community of West Africa Association (HCOWAA), based in Ghana, is a non-governmental organization dedicated to advancing healthcare across West Africa. Addressing the uneven distribution of medical resources, HCOWAA advocates for regional cooperation through a Health Alliance that unites healthcare stakeholders to create a cohesive health community.

With a mission to improve health outcomes in West Africa, HCOWAA facilitates collaboration, innovation, and research among professionals, leveraging collective resources to enhance healthcare services, policies, and access. HCOWAA envisions a resilient West African healthcare system where institutions and professionals lead groundbreaking research, foster innovation, and influence policies that elevate regional healthcare.

Through initiatives like establishing a regional healthcare database, launching research projects, and hosting policy roundtables, HCOWAA builds strong networks to drive healthcare advancements. Advocacy efforts focus on equitable access, supporting vulnerable populations, and addressing healthcare disparities. The organization's objectives include fostering research and innovation, supporting health policy reforms, and integrating medical equipment manufacturers with healthcare facilities.

HCOWAA also facilitates training programs, academic exchanges, and research grants, ensuring members are equipped with knowledge and skills to address regional health challenges effectively. Networking events like the HCOWAA Medical and Health Industry Investment Summit & Expo connect professionals, offering a platform for partnership and knowledge sharing.

HCOWAA's commitment extends to partnerships with international health organizations and academic institutions, which amplify its impact by introducing global best practices and strengthening West African healthcare infrastructure. Collaborative efforts with international partners promote training, research, and infrastructure upgrades for health facilities, pharmaceutical establishments, and clinics.

In addition, HCOWAA's magazine partnerships, including an MoU with Health Pulse Magazine, provide platforms to publish relevant content, share insights, and enhance visibility for ongoing initiatives. Through these combined efforts, HCOWAA aims to foster a collaborative healthcare environment that not only addresses urgent health challenges but also builds a sustainable, inclusive healthcare future for West Africa.

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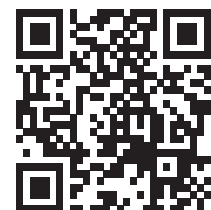
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Rethinking the Meat on Our Plates;

What Diet Means for Cancer Prevention

In the global conversation on health and longevity, few issues spark as much debate as diet. For decades, researchers have explored the relationship between what we eat and our risk of developing chronic diseases, particularly cancer. A recent long-term study involving participants from the United States, the United Kingdom, India, and Taiwan adds important insight to this discussion and raises an important question for both individuals and public health leaders:

Could reducing meat consumption help lower cancer risk?

The study followed participants for an average of 16 years and examined the occurrence of 17 different types of cancer among people with different dietary patterns. Notably, many of the participants were already relatively health-conscious individuals. In the United States, for example, a significant portion of the cohort consisted of Seventh-Day Adventists, a community known for prioritizing healthy eating and physical activity.

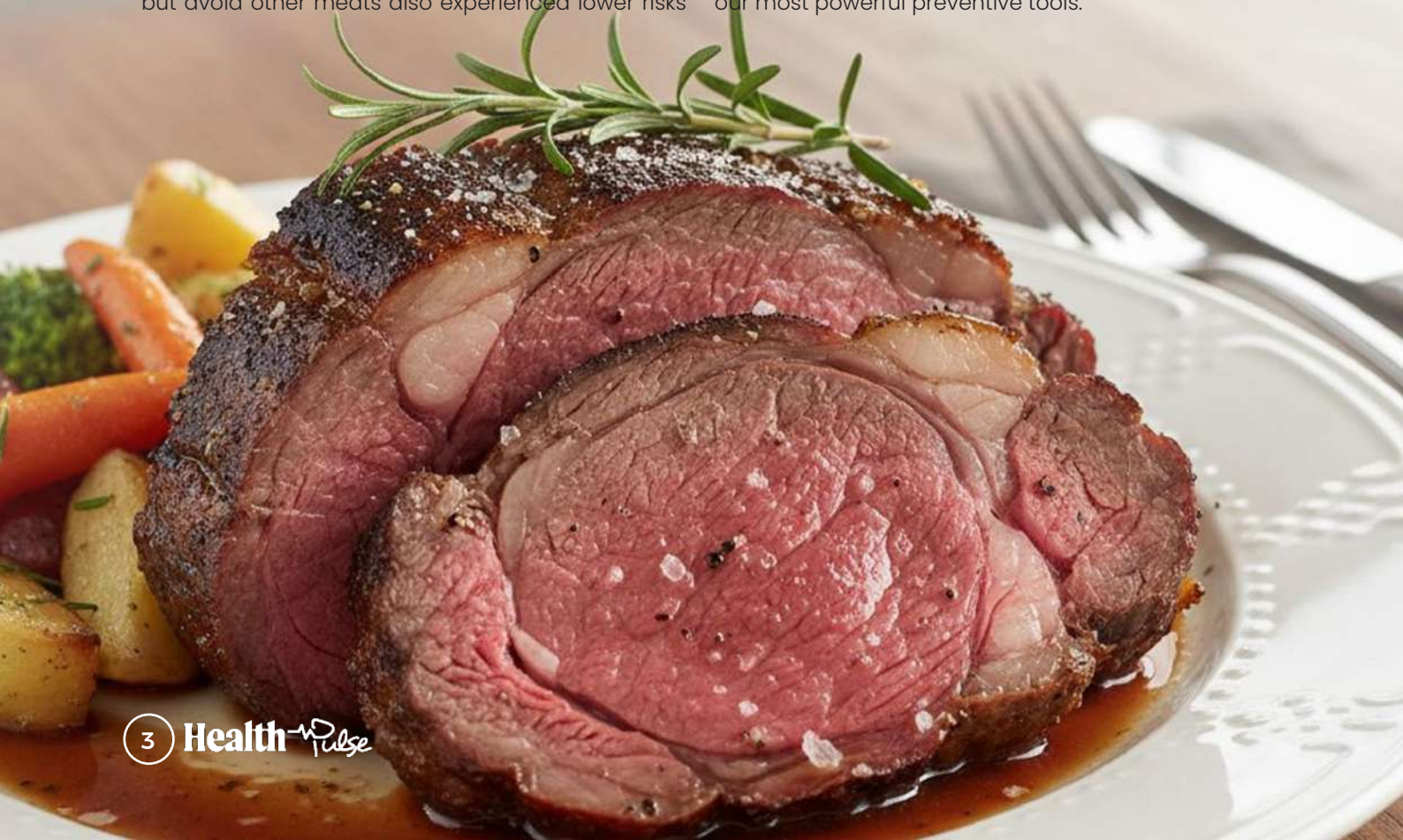
The findings revealed a clear pattern. Vegetarians had a lower risk of developing several types of cancer, including some of the most serious forms. Compared with regular meat eaters, vegetarians showed a **31% lower risk of multiple myeloma, 28% lower risk of kidney cancer, 21% lower risk of pancreatic cancer, 12% lower risk of prostate cancer, and 9% lower risk of breast cancer.** Pescatarians those who eat fish but avoid other meats also experienced lower risks

of colorectal, breast, and kidney cancers.

While these results may strengthen the argument for plant-forward diets, the findings also highlight an important nuance. Researchers noted that completely eliminating animal products may create other nutritional concerns. Some vegetarians and vegans were found to have lower levels of certain micronutrients such as calcium, B vitamins, and riboflavin—nutrients commonly found in animal-based foods. These deficiencies may not show immediate effects but could become apparent over time.

This complexity suggests that the relationship between diet and cancer is not simply about labeling foods as “good” or “bad.” Instead, it points to the importance of balance and moderation. Researchers suspect that certain compounds present in red and processed meats may raise levels of proteins in the blood that can damage organs over time, thereby increasing cancer risk. At the same time, small amounts of nutrient-rich animal products may contribute beneficial vitamins and minerals.

The path to better health may not require abandoning meat entirely but it does invite us to reconsider how much, how often, and what kind we place on our plates. In the fight against cancer, everyday dietary choices may prove to be one of our most powerful preventive tools.



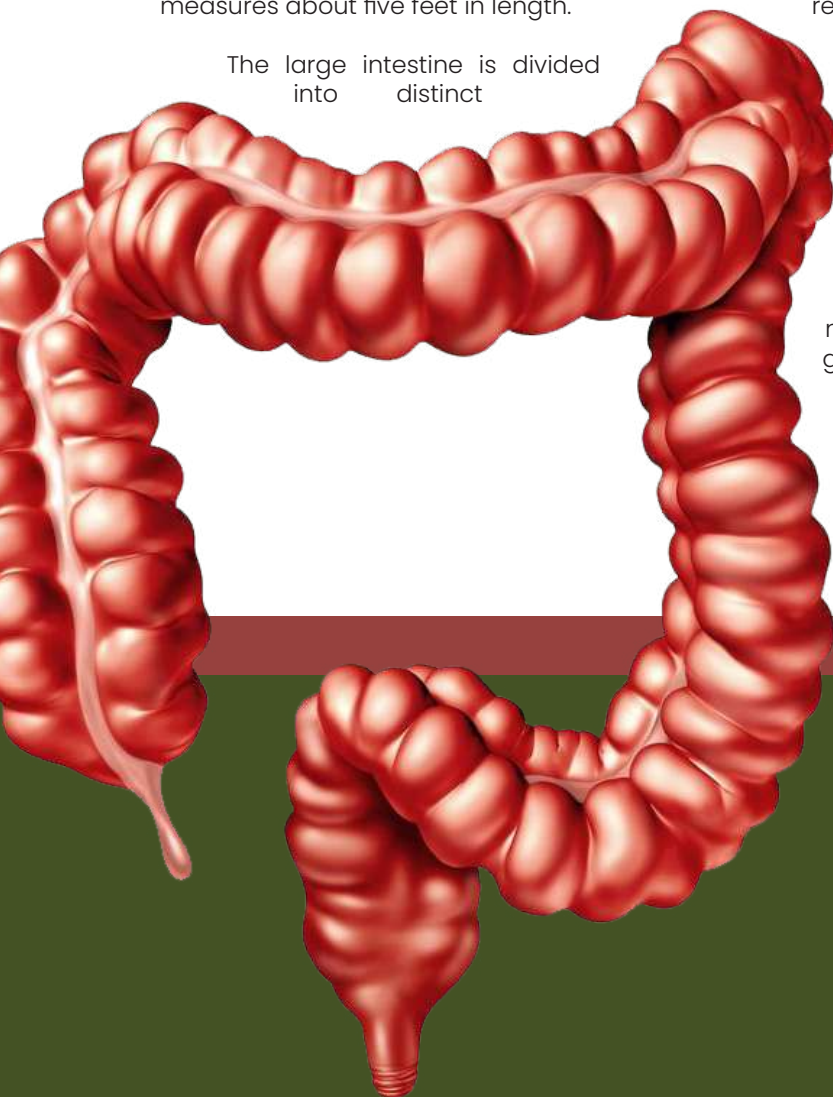
The Large Intestine

By Priscilla Akorfa Fomevor

When we think of digestion, we often picture the stomach or the small intestine. However, the final and crucial stage of this process happens in the large intestine, a powerful organ that acts as the body's waste treatment plant and temporary storage facility.

Often overlooked, the large intestine—also known as the large bowel—is a long, muscular tube and the final section of the gastrointestinal tract. It is situated in the abdominal cavity, forming a kind of upside-down U-shape around the small intestine. It gets its name from its diameter, which is greater than that of the small intestine, and in an adult, it measures about five feet in length.

The large intestine is divided into distinct



parts, each with a specific role. It begins in the lower right abdomen with the cecum, a pouch-like structure to which the appendix is attached. From there, it continues as the colon, which travels up the right side of the body, across the upper abdomen, and then down the left side. Following this is the sigmoid colon, an S-shaped curve that connects to the rectum. The rectum is a muscular chamber that stores stool until it is ready to be expelled through the final segment, the anal canal and anus.

While the small intestine absorbs nutrients, the large intestine focuses on three primary tasks. Its main job is to reclaim water and vital salts from the liquid residue that enters it, turning that material into a more solid form. It also hosts trillions of beneficial bacteria that ferment any remaining undigested fiber, producing some vitamins in the process. Finally, it forms this indigestible material into solid stool and moves it toward the rectum for elimination.

The most common serious condition affecting this organ is colorectal cancer, which starts in the colon or rectum. It often begins as small, noncancerous clumps of cells called polyps that grow on the inner lining. Over time, some polyps can become cancerous. Because of this slow progression, screening tests like colonoscopies are vital, as they can find and remove polyps before they turn into cancer or detect the disease at an early, highly treatable stage.

Is Your Manhood at Risk?

Men's health conversations often avoid one of the most important topics—Sexual Health. When a man's performance begins to change, it can feel alarming and confusing. Many men ignore the signs or hope the problem will simply disappear. But what starts as an occasional difficulty can quickly erode confidence, strain relationships, and affect mental wellbeing. In many cases, it may also be an early warning sign of deeper health problems.

Erectile dysfunction (ED), sometimes referred to as impotence, affects millions of men worldwide. It occurs when a man is unable to achieve or maintain an erection sufficient for satisfactory sexual activity. Health professionals note that ED can stem from physical conditions such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, or stress-related factors, making proper treatment and medical consultation essential.

Namkit contains sildenafil, a phosphodiesterase type 5 (PDE5) inhibitor. The medication works by relaxing blood vessels in the penis, allowing increased blood

flow during sexual stimulation. Importantly, it does not trigger automatic arousal — it supports the body's natural response to sexual excitement.

According to medical guidance, Namkit typically begins to take effect within 30 minutes to one hour after administration. It may be taken with or without food, although heavy meals can delay its onset. The recommended starting dose is generally 50 mg, taken approximately one hour before sexual activity, with dosage adjustments made only under medical supervision. Health experts emphasize that taking more than 100 mg does not increase effectiveness and may raise the risk of side effects.

As with all prescription medications, proper screening is essential. Men who are taking nitrates for chest pain, nitric oxide donors, or certain medications for pulmonary hypertension are advised not to use sildenafil products. Those with severe heart or liver problems, recent stroke or heart attack history, or certain rare eye conditions should also consult a



healthcare professional before use.

Commonly reported side effects are typically mild to moderate and short-lived. However, individuals are urged to seek immediate medical attention if they experience chest pain, a prolonged erection lasting more than four hours, sudden vision changes, or signs of an allergic reaction.

Pharmacists also advise limiting excessive alcohol consumption while using sildenafil, as it may reduce the medication's effectiveness.

With growing awareness around men's health and open conversations about sexual wellness, access to regulated pharmaceutical options remains a priority.

For bulk purchases, Namkit is available at **HCOWA Ghana Company Limited**, located at La-Trade Fair near the **Asa Royale Hotel**.

Health professionals continue to encourage men experiencing persistent erectile difficulties to seek proper medical evaluation, as ED can sometimes be an early indicator of underlying health conditions.

As conversations around men's health expand, the availability of clinically tested treatments such as Namkit represents another step toward addressing a condition that many experience but few openly discuss.



A Guide To Healthy Aging For Women

By Alberta Okyere

Menopause is a natural biological process that marks the end of a woman's reproductive years. Typically occurring between the ages of 45 and 55 although the timing can vary. It is officially diagnosed after a woman has gone twelve consecutive months without a menstrual period. The years leading up to menopause are called perimenopause, a transitional phase when hormones level especially estrogen and progesterone begin to fluctuate. This transition can bring a mix of emotions and physical changes. While some women sail through with minimal discomfort, others experience symptoms that significantly impact their daily lives.

The symptoms of menopause are varied and can be challenging. Hot flashes and night sweats are among the most common complaints, often disrupting sleep and daily activities. Mood swings and emotional shifts are also prevalent, making it essential for women to prioritize their mental health during this period. Changes in menstrual cycles, vaginal dryness, and decreased libido are other symptoms that women may experience.

Managing these symptoms requires a multifaceted approach. Lifestyle tweaks can go a long way in alleviating discomfort. Wearing breathable clothing, using fans to stay cool, and engaging in regular exercise like yoga or walking can help manage hot flashes and improve overall well-being. A balanced diet rich in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains,

coupled with adequate sleep, can also mitigate symptoms. For some women, hormone replacement therapy (HRT) or non-hormonal alternatives like antidepressants or gabapentin may be necessary to manage severe symptoms.

Self-care is crucial during menopause. Prioritizing stress-reducing activities like meditation, reading, or spa days can help manage emotional shifts. Connecting with friends and family for support and practicing self-compassion and patience are also essential. It's a time to focus on personal growth and celebrate this new chapter in life.

Post-menopause, women are at a higher risk for osteoporosis, heart disease, and weight gain. Regular health check-ups, bone density tests, and heart-healthy habits can help mitigate these risks. By staying proactive and focusing on health, women can navigate this transition with confidence and empowerment.

In conclusion, menopause is a significant life transition that requires attention to physical and emotional health. By understanding the symptoms, exploring management options, and prioritizing self-care, women can embrace this change with confidence. It's a time for growth, self-discovery, and empowerment.





Yale Medicine Issues Urgent Warning on Colorectal Cancer

The alarming rise of colorectal cancer in young adults has reached a tipping point: it is now the leading cause of cancer deaths in people under 50, and Yale Medicine surgeons are sounding the alarm for even college students to pay attention.

Once considered a disease of the elderly, colorectal cancer has been steadily increasing in younger generations for years. A new 2026 study published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* found that while overall cancer mortality dropped 44% in Americans under 50 between 1990 and 2023, colorectal cancer diagnoses have increased by 1.1% annually since 2005. The disease has climbed from the fifth leading cause of cancer death in this age group to the first.

"We are seeing a clear uptick in colorectal cancer in younger generations," said Dr. Haddon Pantel, a Yale Medicine colorectal surgeon. His practice recently saw seven young patients diagnosed with rectal cancer in a single week—the oldest was just 35. The youngest colorectal cancer patient diagnosed at Yale in recent months was only 18 and it is now recommend most Americans begin screening at age 45, five years earlier than previously advised.

But screening guidelines don't help the youngest patients, which is why Yale doctors are focusing on symptom awareness. Dr. Vikram Reddy, who helped identify the rising incidence in young people 15 years ago, urges anyone with symptoms to seek evaluation immediately. "If anyone has any change in their bowel habits, if they have any bleeding—even if they think it's a hemorrhoid, and it doesn't go away—just get a colonoscopy," he said.

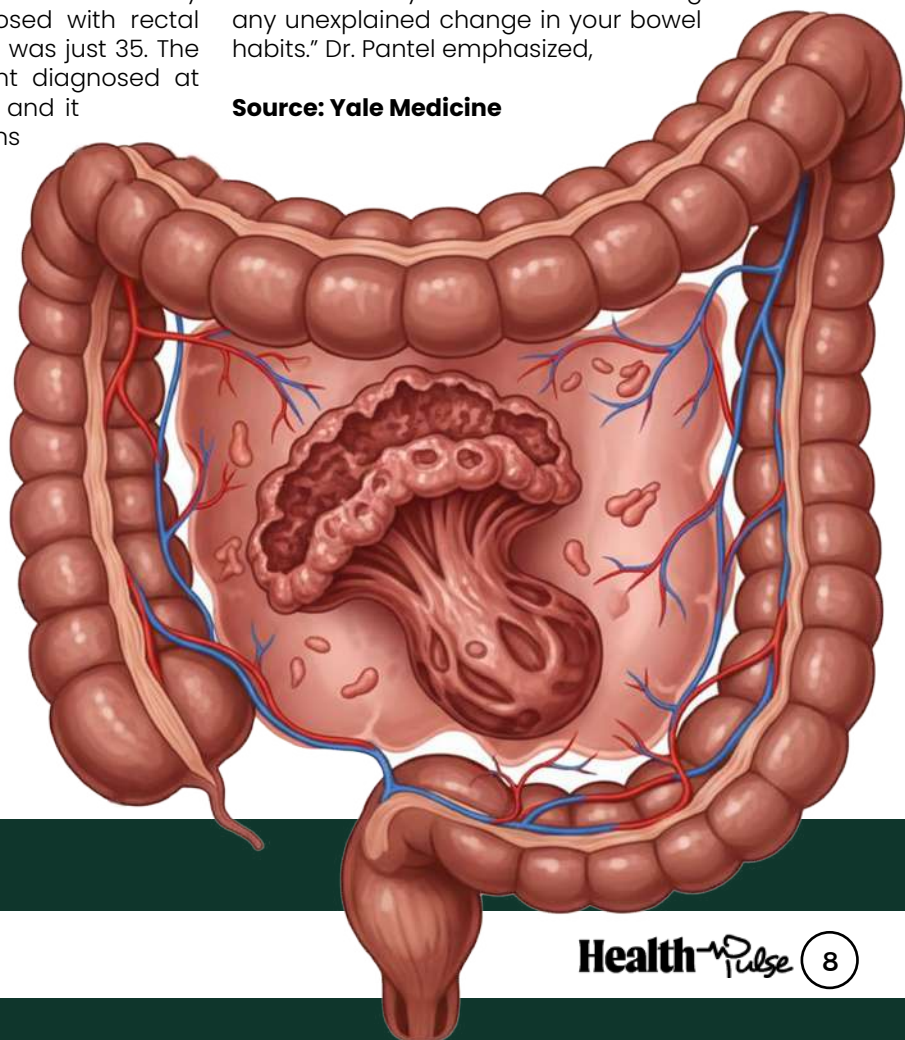
Warning signs include rectal

bleeding, blood in the stool, dark or black stools, narrow or ribbon-like stools, persistent diarrhea or constipation lasting more than two weeks, unexplained weight loss, and fatigue that might indicate anemia.

Why rates are rising in young people remains unclear. Lifestyle factors including sedentary behavior, obesity, smoking, heavy alcohol use, and low-fiber diets may contribute. Genetics don't explain the surge—most cases appear sporadically. For young adults diagnosed, the disease strikes during critical life years, potentially affecting careers, fertility, and finances. But treatment can be highly successful when caught early, and support services help patients navigate physical and emotional challenges.

"Even if you're in your 20s or 30s, you should get checked out if you have rectal bleeding or any unexplained change in your bowel habits," Dr. Pantel emphasized,

Source: Yale Medicine



AI in Healthcare: What It Means for Ghana

Artificial intelligence, commonly known as AI, is the ability of computers to learn from data and make decisions in ways that mimic human thinking. In healthcare, this means machines can help doctors detect diseases, interpret medical images, predict health risks, and manage hospital systems more efficiently. What once sounded like science fiction is now becoming part of everyday medical practice around the world.

The rise of AI in healthcare has been driven by the growth of digital data and faster computers. Hospitals now store patient records electronically, laboratories produce digital results, and imaging machines generate high-quality scans. AI systems are trained to analyze this large amount of information and identify patterns that may be difficult or time-consuming for humans to detect. Instead of replacing doctors, these tools are designed to support them by improving speed and accuracy.

In Ghana, AI is gradually entering the healthcare space through partnerships and local innovation. One important development is the use of AI-powered chest X-ray systems to help detect tuberculosis. Through collaboration between the Ministry of Health and international technology partners such as Qure.ai, some hospitals, including the 37 Military Hospital in Accra, are using AI software to analyze X-rays and quickly flag possible signs of TB and other lung diseases. This is especially helpful in a country where there are limited numbers of radiologists.

Local innovation is also playing a role. MinoHealth AI Labs, a Ghanaian health technology company founded by Darlington Akogo, has developed AI tools that assist in analyzing medical images and supporting diagnosis. Projects like this show that Ghana is not only adopting foreign technology but also creating homegrown solutions tailored to local health challenges.

Beyond diagnosis, AI is being explored to improve health system management. The Ghana Health Service has introduced digital tools to strengthen disease surveillance and health data reporting. With better data systems, AI can help predict disease outbreaks, monitor public health trends, and ensure that medicines and supplies are distributed where they are most needed. These improvements may not always be visible to patients, but they can make healthcare more efficient behind the scenes.



By **Meshach Kweku Galley**
Diagnostic Radiographer

Despite the promise, challenges remain. Many health facilities still struggle with limited internet access, inconsistent electricity, and incomplete digital records. AI systems depend on reliable data, and without strong digital infrastructure, their full benefits cannot be realized. There are also important concerns about patient privacy and ensuring that AI systems are fair and unbiased.

Looking ahead, the future of AI in Ghana's healthcare system is promising. With continued investment in digital infrastructure, training for health workers, and clear national policies on data protection and ethical use, AI could help expand access to quality healthcare across the country. It may support earlier disease detection, improve maternal and child health monitoring, and strengthen responses to infectious diseases.

AI in healthcare is not about machines taking over hospitals. It is about using smart technology to support doctors, nurses, and community health workers so they can deliver better care. If carefully implemented, AI has the potential to make Ghana's healthcare system more responsive, more efficient, and more accessible to all.



African Union Summit Renews Push to Fix School Nutrition Crisis

Millions of African children are going to school hungry and health and education leaders say that is no longer acceptable. The 11th Africa Day of School Feeding, held in Gaborone, Botswana from February 28 to March 1, 2026, brought together ministers, development partners, civil society, and health experts from across the continent with one urgent mandate: transform school nutrition from a basic safety net into a powerful engine for child health and national development.

Co-organised by the Government of Botswana and the African Union under the theme “Ensuring Access to Nutritious Meals, Clean Water, and Hygiene: Promoting Safety and Resilience in Every School Meal Investment,” the summit emphasised the strong link between school feeding, water and sanitation systems, climate resilience, and Africa’s human capital development.

The scale of the challenge and the

opportunity is immense. School feeding programmes have already reached over 86 million children across the continent, and investments from Member States have nearly doubled within the past decade. Reports indicate that for every dollar invested in school feeding, there is an economic return of up to \$9 through improved health, education, and local agricultural development.

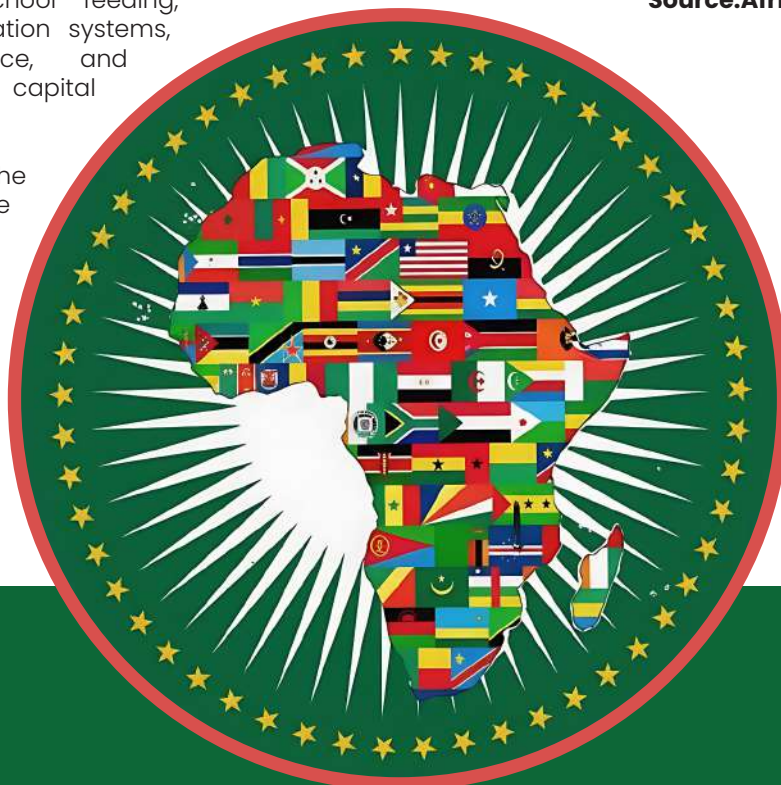
Yet significant gaps remain. Leaders called for a decisive shift away from donor dependency toward domestic financing, with a particular focus on the Home-Grown School Feeding model a locally driven approach that sources food from smallholder farmers, many of them women, strengthening both nutrition and rural economies simultaneously.

A dedicated side event focused specifically on integrating education, nutrition, and WASH to advance girls’ education in Africa, bringing together government officials, civil society organisations, and students to explore practical actions for scaling gender-sensitive models across AU Member States.

The summit concluded with a clear message: beyond the meal lies a powerful engine for resilience, equity, and sustainable development across the continent.

With 2030 SDG deadlines approaching, Africa’s leaders are sending a powerful signal feeding a child is not charity. It is an investment in the continent’s future.

Source: African Union





The Deadliest Colorectal Cancer Myth

By Marilyn Tiphaine Fifame

For generations, colorectal cancer has been dismissed as an “old person’s disease.” It was something to worry about after 60, perhaps 70. Young, healthy adults particularly across Africa rarely gave it a second thought. That assumption is now not just outdated; it is deadly.

The data is alarming and urgent. Colorectal cancer is rising at nearly 3% per year in people under 50, even as incidence has declined slightly in the overall population. Today, one in five people diagnosed with colorectal cancer is under the age of 55 and it is now the

leading cause of cancer-related death among young adults.

A landmark 2026 report from the American Cancer Society found that colorectal cancer rates are moving in two very different directions declining among older adults while rising sharply in people under 65, with 200 new diagnoses occurring every single day in people younger than 65.

Perhaps most troubling is how late these younger patients are being caught. Three in four colorectal cancers in adults younger than 50 are diagnosed at an advanced stage, yet the five-year survival rate for local-stage disease is 95%. Early detection is not just beneficial it is life-saving.

Globally, an estimated 10% of all colorectal cancer cases already occur in people under 50, with projections suggesting that by 2030, incidence in those aged 20 to 34 could rise by 90%. In Africa, where diets are rapidly shifting toward processed, low-fibre foods, physical

inactivity is rising, and screening programmes remain limited, the threat to younger populations is especially acute.

The contributing factors include obesity, high alcohol consumption, sedentary lifestyles, gut microbiome changes, and ultra-processed food consumption all trends accelerating across African urban centres.

The message this Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month is clear: age is no longer a shield. Whether you are 30, 40, or 50 know the symptoms, demand screening, and do not wait. Your youth is not your protection. Early action is.



Nutritional Psychiatry: You Are What You Eat

Your brain is always on, working around the clock to manage your thoughts, movements, and senses. This relentless activity demands a constant supply of fuel, and that fuel comes directly from the foods you eat. The emerging field of nutritional psychiatry focuses on this very connection, exploring how diet directly influences bra

in structure and function, and ultimately, your mood. Think of your brain as an expensive, high-performance car. It runs best on premium fuel. Eating high-quality foods rich in vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants nourishes the brain and protects it from damaging oxidative stress. Conversely, a diet of low-grade fuel, like processed or refined foods, can be harmful. The brain struggles to eliminate the substances found in these foods, which promote inflammation and oxidative stress. Multiple studies have linked diets high in refined sugars not only to impaired brain function but also to a worsening of mood disorders like depression.

For years, this connection was not fully appreciated by the medical field. Today, we understand a key player is the gut. Approximately ninety-five percent of your serotonin, a neurotransmitter that regulates mood, sleep, and appetite, is produced in your gastrointestinal tract. This gut is lined with millions

of nerve cells and is home to trillions of “good” bacteria that make up your microbiome. These bacteria protect the gut lining, limit inflammation, and communicate directly with the brain via neural pathways. The health of this internal ecosystem has a profound impact on your emotional state and energy levels.

Research comparing traditional diets, like the Mediterranean diet, to the typical Western diet reveals that those eating traditional foods have a twenty-five to thirty-five percent lower risk of depression. These diets are rich in vegetables, fruits, and unprocessed grains while being naturally free of refined sugars and processed foods.

You can test this for yourself. Try eating a “clean” diet for a few weeks, cutting out all processed foods and sugar, and observe how you feel. When you slowly reintroduce other foods, the difference in your physical and emotional well-being can be striking, proving just how powerful the link between your plate and your mood truly is.

Source: Harvard Health Publishing





Habits For Healthy, Glowing Skin

By Alberta okyere

Skin cancer is one of the most common types of cancer in the world. It occurs when skin cells grow abnormally, usually as a result of damage to their DNA. The most common cause of this damage is exposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun or from artificial sources such as tanning beds. Although skin cancer can affect anyone, understanding its causes, warning signs, and prevention methods can greatly reduce the risk.

There are three main types of skin cancer: basal cell carcinoma, squamous cell carcinoma, and melanoma. Basal cell carcinoma is the most common and usually develops in areas frequently exposed to the sun, such as the face and neck. It tends to grow slowly and rarely spreads to other parts of the body. Squamous cell carcinoma is also common and may appear as a red, scaly patch or a sore that does not heal. Melanoma is less common but much more dangerous because it can spread quickly to other organs if not detected early.

Several factors increase the risk of developing skin cancer. Prolonged exposure to sunlight without protection is the most significant risk factor. People with lighter skin tones, freckles, or a history of sunburn are generally more vulnerable because they have less protective pigment in their skin.

However, skin cancer can affect individuals of all skin tones. Other risk factors include excessive use of tanning beds, a weakened immune system, and a family history of skin cancer.

Early detection plays a crucial role in successful treatment. Changes in the skin, such as a new mole, a change in the size or color of an existing mole, or a sore that does not heal, may be warning signs.

Fortunately, many cases of skin cancer can be prevented. Protecting the skin from excessive sun exposure is essential. This includes wearing sunscreen with a high sun protection factor (SPF), using protective clothing such as hats and sunglasses, and avoiding direct sunlight during peak hours. Regular skin checks and visits to a healthcare professional can also help detect potential problems early.

In conclusion, skin cancer is a serious but largely preventable disease. By understanding the risks, recognizing early signs, and practicing proper sun protection, individuals can significantly reduce their chances of developing this condition and maintain healthier skin.



2023

CHINA-WEST AFRICA INDUSTRY EXPO AND AI DIAGNOSIS AND P...

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16	WEST AFRICAN COUNTRIES
20+	OTHER COUNTRIES
5,000+	MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS

ADVANCING HEALTHCARE





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Ear, Nose, And Throat (ENT) Infections – Maintaining Men's Health and Productivity.

Maintaining men's health requires more than occasional gym visits. Experts recommend at least 150 minutes of moderate aerobic activity weekly, strength training, balanced nutrition rich in fruits and vegetables, adequate sleep, stress management, and routine health screenings. However, even men who follow these guidelines can find themselves sidelined by recurring ENT conditions.



Dr. Emmanuel Kwaku Ireland

PharmD, MBA, BPharm, MPSGH

ENT infections are commonly caused by viruses such as colds and influenza, and sometimes bacteria. Because the ear, nose, and throat are interconnected, infections can easily spread between these regions. Typical symptoms include ear pain or discharge, nasal congestion, sinus pressure, sore throat, fever, dizziness, and even reduced hearing. While many mild infections resolve within a few days, others can linger and evolve into chronic conditions.

Common ENT conditions include ear infections like otitis media, sinus infections (sinusitis), allergic rhinitis, tonsillitis, and pharyngitis. Beyond the physical discomfort, these illnesses often trigger “mental fog,” fatigue, headaches, and communication difficulties—factors that directly affect workplace efficiency.

Research published by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) shows that ENT-related illnesses significantly impact productivity. Chronic rhinosinusitis, for instance, has been associated with as many as 24.6 missed workdays annually in severe cases. Even when men report to work, they may not function at full capacity. Allergic rhinitis sufferers can experience reduced performance for over 50 days per year. Persistent sinus pressure, headaches, and poor sleep quality—especially in cases of sleep apnea—lead to slowed decision-making, irritability, and reduced concentration during meetings and tasks.

Despite these impacts, many men delay seeking medical care. Traditional notions of toughness and self-reliance often discourage early consultation. Men may self-medicate or ignore symptoms until they become severe. Unfortunately, delayed treatment can increase the risk of complications such as chronic sinusitis, hearing loss, or prolonged infections.

Prevention remains the first line of defense. Smoking cessation is crucial, as tobacco irritates the mucous membranes and increases infection risk. Practicing good hand hygiene helps prevent respiratory infections. Managing allergies, maintaining a healthy weight to reduce sleep apnea risk, protecting the ears from loud noise, and prioritizing adequate sleep all contribute to better ENT health.

For mild symptoms, home remedies such as saline nasal rinses, steam inhalation, warm salt-water gargles, and appropriate over-the-counter pain relief can provide comfort. However, symptoms that persist beyond three to seven days, severe ear pain, high fever, breathing difficulties, recurrent tonsillitis, hearing loss, or prolonged hoarseness warrant prompt medical evaluation.

Professional treatment may include antibiotics for confirmed bacterial infections, nasal corticosteroids, antihistamines, or in some cases, minor surgical procedures such as tonsillectomy, septoplasty, or ear tube

insertion.

Another growing concern is antimicrobial resistance (AMR). Inappropriate or excessive use of antibiotics can make infections harder to treat. Avoiding self-medication and following prescribed treatments responsibly are essential to preserving the effectiveness of these medicines. Ultimately, protecting men's ENT health is not merely about relieving discomfort—it is about safeguarding productivity, mental clarity, and long-term well-being. Addressing symptoms early, embracing preventive care, and seeking timely professional advice can help men stay healthy, focused, and fully engaged in both work and life.

Additionally, quality of care in treating ear, nose, and throat (ENT) infections needs timely, evidence-based interventions to prevent complications like hearing loss or chronic sinusitis and avoid substantial negative impact on productivity



Colorectal Cancer

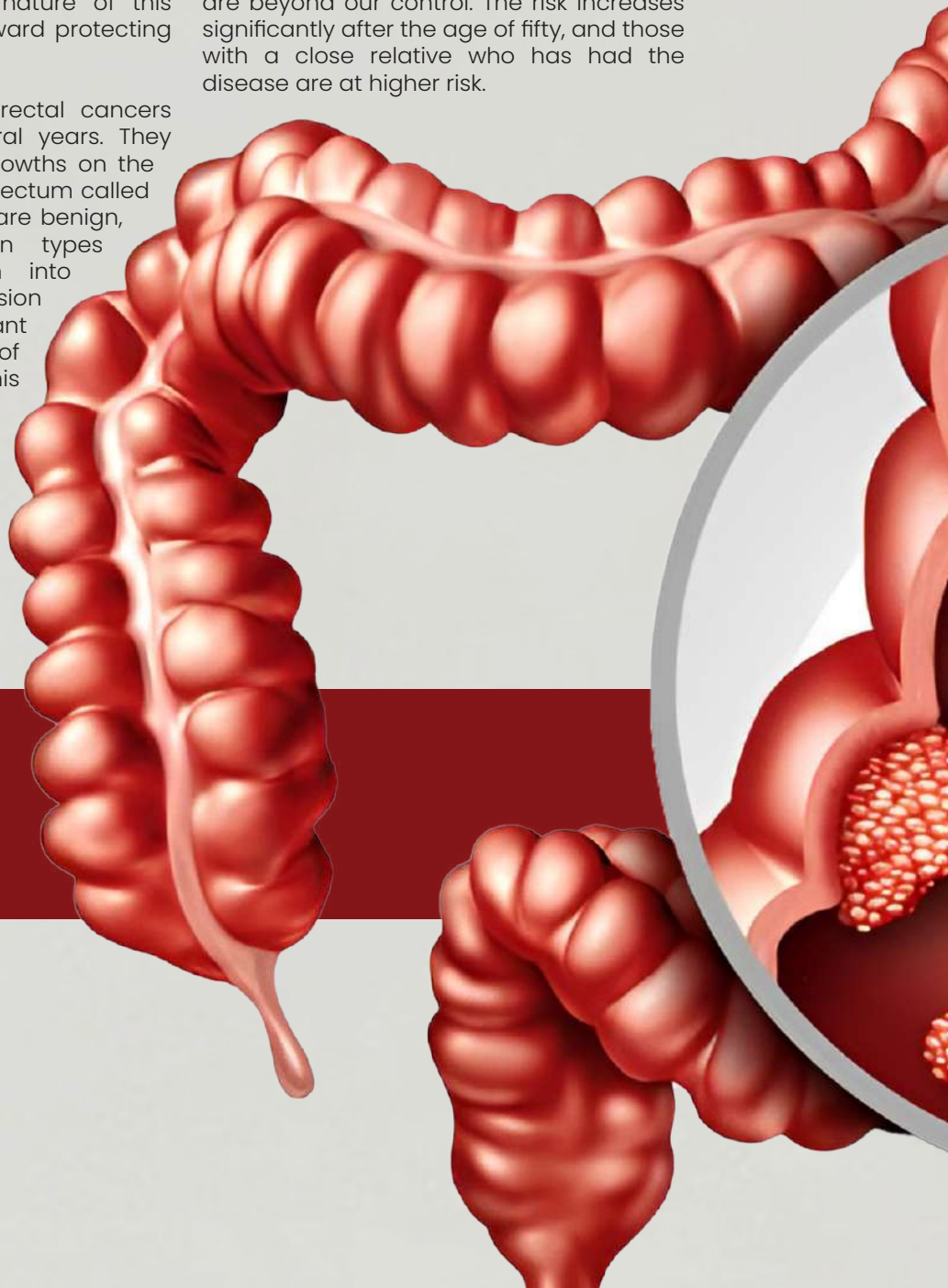
By Priscilla Akorfa Fomevor

Colorectal cancer is a malignant condition that begins in the colon or the rectum, which together make up the large intestine, the final section of the digestive tract. It is one of the most common cancers diagnosed worldwide, but it is also one of the most preventable and treatable when detected early. Understanding the nature of this disease is the first step toward protecting oneself from it.

The vast majority of colorectal cancers develop slowly over several years. They typically begin as small growths on the inner lining of the colon or rectum called polyps. While most polyps are benign, or noncancerous, certain types can gradually transform into cancer. This slow progression from a polyp to a malignant tumor is a critical window of opportunity. Because of this

lengthy timeline, regular screening can effectively catch and remove these polyps long before they ever pose a serious threat.

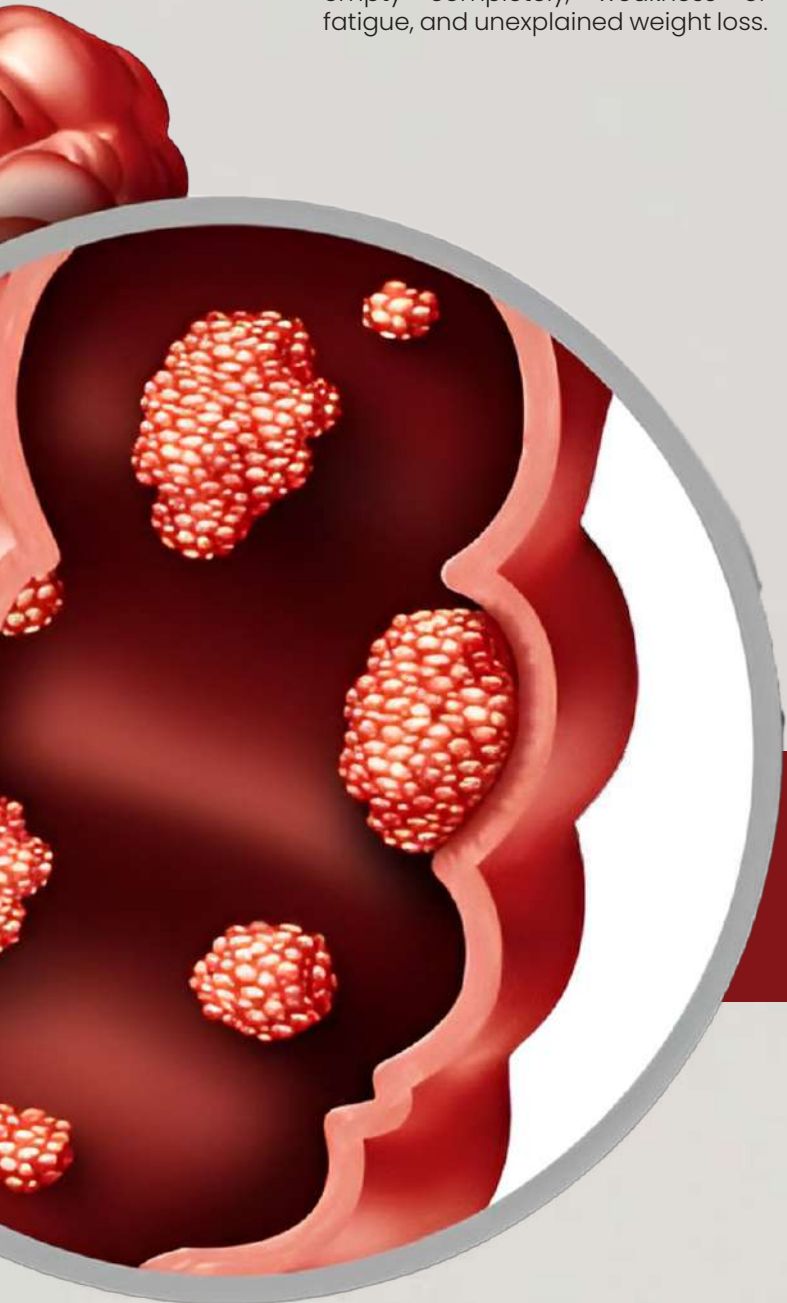
Several risk factors can increase a person's likelihood of developing colorectal cancer. Some of these, like age and family history, are beyond our control. The risk increases significantly after the age of fifty, and those with a close relative who has had the disease are at higher risk.



However, many risk factors are lifestyle-related. A diet high in red and processed meats, a sedentary lifestyle, obesity, smoking, and heavy alcohol use have all been linked to a higher incidence of colorectal cancer.

In its early stages, colorectal cancer often presents no symptoms at all, which is why screening is so vital. As the disease progresses, symptoms may include a persistent change in bowel habits such as diarrhea or constipation, rectal bleeding or blood in the stool, abdominal discomfort like cramps or pain, a feeling that the bowel does not empty completely, weakness or fatigue, and unexplained weight loss.

Fortunately, there are powerful tools to fight this cancer. Screening tests, particularly colonoscopies, are the gold standard for prevention. They allow a doctor to visualize the entire colon and remove polyps during the same procedure. If cancer is found, treatment depends on the stage and may involve surgery to remove the tumor, chemotherapy, radiation therapy, or targeted drug therapies. With early detection through screening, the five-year survival rate for colorectal cancer is very high, making it a disease for which we have a tremendous ability to intervene successfully.



Constipation:

A Common Digestive Problem That Should Not Be Ignored

By Hilda Larsay

Constipation is a digestive condition that affects millions of people worldwide. Although it is very common, many people hesitate to discuss it. The condition occurs when bowel movements become less frequent or when stool becomes hard to pass. Generally, constipation is defined as having fewer than three bowel movements a week or passing hard, dry stool.

Several factors can lead to constipation. The most common cause is a diet that lacks enough fiber. Fiber plays an important role in digestion because it helps stool move easily through the intestines. People who eat large amounts of processed foods but consume little fruit, vegetables, or whole grains are more likely to experience constipation. Insufficient water intake is another major contributor. When the body does not receive enough fluids, stool can become hard and difficult to pass.

Lifestyle habits also influence how well the digestive system works. People who do not engage in regular physical activity

may experience slower bowel movement because exercise helps stimulate the intestines. Ignoring the urge to visit the toilet can also lead to constipation. Stress, changes in daily routine, and certain medications may further disrupt normal digestion.

Constipation can present several uncomfortable symptoms. Apart from infrequent bowel movements, people may experience bloating, stomach discomfort, and the need to strain when passing stool. Some individuals may also feel that their bowel has not been completely emptied after using the toilet. If the problem continues for a long period, it can cause complications such as hemorrhoids due to repeated straining.



Fortunately, constipation can often be prevented and managed with simple lifestyle adjustments. Eating foods that are rich in fiber can significantly improve digestion. Examples include beans, oats, vegetables, fruits, and whole-grain foods. Drinking enough water during the day is equally important because fluids help soften stool and make it easier to pass.

Regular physical activity also supports healthy digestion. Activities such as walking or light exercise can stimulate bowel movement and help the body maintain a natural rhythm. Creating a consistent bathroom routine, especially after meals, may also encourage regular bowel habits.

Although constipation is usually not serious, persistent symptoms should not be overlooked. If the condition lasts for several weeks or is accompanied by severe pain or blood in the stool, medical attention is necessary. Taking early steps to improve diet and lifestyle can help maintain a healthy digestive system and prevent long-term discomfort.

Green Smoothie Bowl Recipe

Kickstart your morning with this nutritious Green Smoothie Bowl, packed with spinach, banana, pineapple and chia seeds. This nutrient-dense meal supports digestive health, provides sustained energy and fuels your body with essential vitamins and minerals.

Ingredients:

- 1 cup frozen spinach
- 1 ripe banana
- 1/2 cup frozen pineapple
- 1/2 cup unsweetened almond milk
- 1 tablespoon chia seeds
- 1 tablespoon almond butter
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- Ice cubes (optional)

Toppings:

- Sliced fresh fruits (e.g., banana, berries)/ Chopped nuts (e.g., almonds)
- Coconut flakes/ Granola

Instructions:

1. Blend spinach, banana, pineapple, almond milk, chia seeds, almond butter, and vanilla extract until smooth.
2. Add ice cubes if a thicker consistency is desired.
3. Pour into a bowl.
4. Top with your favorite fruits, granola, nuts, and coconut flakes.



Colorectal Cancer Prevention Starts at Home

By Priscilla Akorfa Fomevor

When we think about protecting our families from cancer, we often focus on screenings and doctor's appointments. However, one of the most powerful tools for reducing colorectal cancer risk is something we do together every day: how we live, eat, and move as a family. The same habits that lower cancer risk also lead to healthier hearts and more energy for everyone at the table.

A diet rich in fiber from fruits, vegetables, legumes and whole grains helps keep the digestive

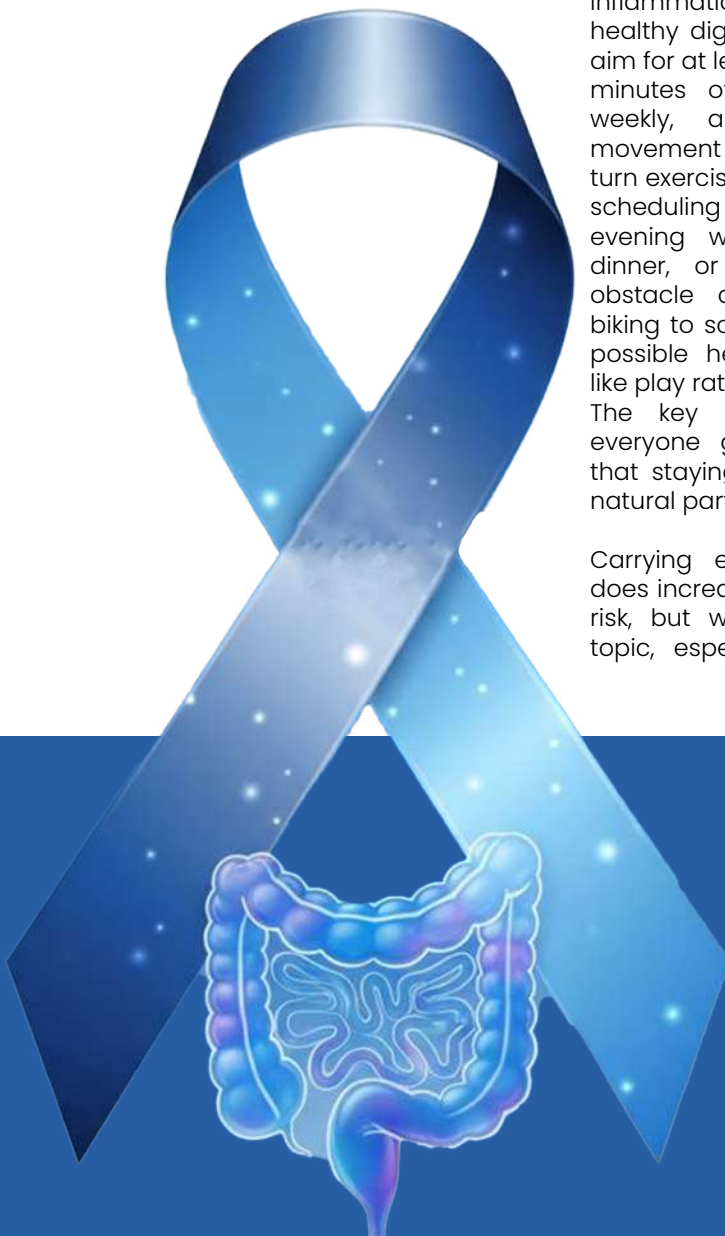
system running smoothly and may help clear potential carcinogens from the body. Families can work toward this by experimenting with bean-based recipes, keeping fresh fruit visible for easy snacking, switching to whole grains, and thinking of meat as a side dish rather than the main event.

Regular physical activity is another cornerstone of prevention, as it helps regulate hormones, reduces inflammation, and supports healthy digestion. Adults should aim for at least one hundred fifty minutes of moderate activity weekly, and children need movement as well. Families can turn exercise into quality time by scheduling weekend hikes, taking evening walks together after dinner, or creating backyard obstacle courses. Walking or biking to school and work when possible helps movement feel like play rather than punishment. The key is finding activities everyone genuinely enjoys so that staying active becomes a natural part of family life.

Carrying excess body weight does increase colorectal cancer risk, but weight is a sensitive topic, especially with children.

The healthiest approach is to make this a family goal focused on wellness rather than appearance. This means concentrating on health behaviors rather than numbers on a scale, keeping healthy snacks accessible while limiting sugary drinks, and practicing mindful eating by sitting down together for meals without screens. Families can model moderate drinking habits and create social environments that do not center around alcohol. When families adopt these habits together, no one feels singled out.

The idea of changing lifelong habits can feel overwhelming, but lasting change happens through small, consistent steps. Over time, these collective efforts add up to meaningful risk reduction. The most powerful message a family can send is that they take care of each other, and that includes taking care of their health together. Remember that while lifestyle changes are powerful, they do not replace regular screening, so families should talk with their healthcare providers about when to begin colorectal cancer screening based on their personal history.



The Untold Truth About Epilepsy

Epilepsy is one of the most common neurological conditions in the world, yet it remains widely misunderstood. Affecting millions of people across all age groups, the condition is marked by recurrent seizures caused by abnormal electrical activity in the brain. While some seizures are brief and barely noticeable, others can be dramatic and frightening to witness.

In this edition of Health Pulse Magazine, we speak with a Medical Officer who sheds light on the untold truth about epilepsy from its causes and warning signs to treatment options and the realities of living with the condition. The conversation aims to replace myths with medical facts and encourage greater understanding and support for people living with epilepsy.

What exactly is epilepsy, and how is it different from having a single seizure?

Epilepsy is a neurological disorder that affects the brain's electrical activity. Normally, the brain sends signals in an organized way, but in epilepsy these signals become abnormal and may trigger seizures.

A seizure is a sudden burst of abnormal electrical activity that can cause symptoms such as jerking movements, loss of consciousness, unusual sensations, or confusion. However, having a single seizure does not necessarily mean someone has epilepsy. The condition is usually diagnosed when a person experiences two or more unprovoked seizures occurring at different times. In young children, seizures may sometimes occur due to fever or temporary body imbalances and may not indicate epilepsy.

What are the common causes of epilepsy? Can someone develop it later in life?

Yes. Epilepsy can develop at any age. Causes may include genetic factors, electrolyte imbalances in the brain, brain injuries from road accidents, brain tumors, or blood clots affecting normal brain activity. Severe jaundice in newborns may also lead to seizures later in life. In some cases, the exact cause cannot be identified, but the condition can still be managed effectively.

Is epilepsy contagious or caused by supernatural forces?

No. Epilepsy is not contagious and cannot be spread from one person to another. It is also not caused by spiritual or supernatural forces. It is a medical condition affecting the brain. While it may run in families due to genetic factors, people cannot "catch" epilepsy through contact.



Dr. Magdaline Ansah

Pediatrician - Korle Bu Teaching Hospital

Are all seizures dramatic convulsions?

Not always. Some seizures are subtle and may be difficult to recognize. Signs can include sudden loss of awareness, staring spells, lip smacking, abnormal behavior, unusual eye movements, or sudden falls. Because these symptoms can be mild, they are sometimes mistaken for daydreaming or fatigue.

What should someone do if they witness a seizure? The most important step is to remain calm and ensure the person's safety. Clear nearby objects to prevent injury and loosen tight clothing around the neck. If possible, gently turn the person onto their side. Do not place anything in the person's mouth. Medical help should be sought if the seizure lasts longer than 15 minutes or if repeated seizures occur.

Is epilepsy curable?

Epilepsy is generally a manageable condition rather than a curable one. Many people live normal, active lives when seizures are properly controlled with medication and regular medical follow-up.

What message would you like to share with families and communities?

Epilepsy is a medical condition like many others and should not be a source of stigma or discrimination. Families and communities should learn basic seizure first aid, support those affected, and encourage them to seek proper medical care. With understanding and compassion, people living with epilepsy can lead healthy and fulfilling lives.



Fueling a Healthy Body and Mind

By Yeboah Diana

Nutrition is the foundation of health, providing the body with the energy, vitamins, and minerals needed to function optimally. Every meal we eat impacts our physical performance, mental clarity, immune system, and long-term wellbeing. Proper nutrition is not just about avoiding disease—it's about thriving.

A balanced diet typically includes a variety of food groups: carbohydrates, proteins, fats, vitamins, and minerals. Carbohydrates, found in foods like whole grains, fruits, and vegetables, are the body's primary energy source. Proteins, from sources such as meat, fish, legumes, and dairy, are essential for growth, tissue repair, and immune function. Fats, particularly healthy unsaturated fats from nuts, seeds, and olive oil, support brain function, hormone production, and nutrient absorption.

Vitamins and minerals, though required in smaller amounts, are crucial for maintaining health. Vitamin A supports vision and immunity, calcium and vitamin D strengthen bones, and iron ensures efficient oxygen transport in the blood. Deficiencies can lead to conditions such as anemia, weakened immunity, or developmental delays in children.

Hydration is another essential component of nutrition. Water is necessary for digestion, temperature regulation, and waste elimination.

Even mild dehydration can impair cognitive function, mood, and physical performance. Experts recommend at least 8 glasses of water daily, though requirements vary depending on activity level and climate.

For populations in Africa and other developing regions, malnutrition remains a major public health challenge. Undernutrition, micronutrient deficiencies, and obesity-related problems coexist, highlighting the need for public health interventions and education. Governments and organizations are increasingly promoting programs that combine education, supplementation, and community-based nutrition initiatives to improve access to healthy foods.

Modern nutrition science emphasizes personalized approaches, considering genetics, lifestyle, and cultural factors. While general guidelines provide a foundation, individual needs may vary. Monitoring portion sizes, balancing macronutrients, and prioritizing whole, minimally processed foods are key strategies for long-term health.

In conclusion, nutrition is far more than eating it is a cornerstone of life, health, and productivity. By making informed dietary choices, staying hydrated, and understanding the body's unique needs, individuals can enhance their physical and mental well-being, reduce the risk of disease, and live more vibrant, healthy lives.



Health Terms

Dietary Fibre

A plant-based carbohydrate found in whole grains, legumes, fruits, and vegetables that speeds the passage of waste through the colon, reducing the time carcinogens remain in contact with the colon wall strongly linked to a lower risk of colorectal cancer.

Red and Processed Meat:

Beef, pork, lamb, sausages, and smoked or cured meats classified by the World Health Organization as Group 1 carcinogens. Regular consumption is directly linked to an increased risk of colorectal cancer through the production of harmful compounds during digestion and cooking.

Folate

A B-vitamin found naturally in leafy green vegetables, legumes, and fortified foods. Adequate folate intake supports healthy DNA repair and replication deficiencies have been associated with an elevated risk of colorectal cancer, particularly relevant across nutrient-deficient African populations.

Calcium:

A mineral found in dairy products, leafy greens, and fortified foods that binds to bile acids and fatty acids in the colon, reducing their damaging effects on colon cells and lowering colorectal cancer risk.

Vitamin D:

A fat-soluble vitamin obtained through sunlight exposure and diet. Low vitamin D levels have been consistently associated with a higher risk of colorectal cancer, influencing cell growth regulation and immune defence within the colon.

Gut Microbiome:

The vast community of bacteria residing in the digestive tract. A fibre-rich, plant-based diet fosters a healthy, diverse microbiome that produces protective short-chain fatty acids an imbalanced microbiome linked to poor diet is increasingly connected to colorectal cancer development.

Ultra-Processed Foods:

Industrially manufactured products high in sugar, unhealthy fats, salt, and additives including instant noodles, packaged snacks, and sugary drinks whose rising consumption across urban Africa is strongly associated

with increased colorectal cancer risk, particularly in adults under 50.

Obesity:

A condition of excess body fat driven largely by poor diet and physical inactivity. Obesity promotes chronic inflammation and elevated insulin levels both of which create a biological environment that significantly accelerates colorectal cancer development and progression.

Alcohol:

A Group 1 carcinogen that, when consumed regularly, damages the lining of the colon and rectum directly. Alcohol metabolism produces acetaldehyde a toxic compound that interferes with DNA repair and is strongly linked to colorectal cancer risk.

Antioxidants:

Protective compounds including vitamins C and E, selenium, and beta-carotene found abundantly in fruits and vegetables. Antioxidants neutralise free radicals that damage colon cells, helping to suppress the cellular mutations that can lead to colorectal cancer over time.

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