



HouseCalls

House Calls with Dr. De La Flor

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Dear Doctor De La Flor,

My dad died of colon cancer, what symptoms should I watch out for? Do you recommend any testing to prevent it?

CHEERS,
GRAHAM

Dear Graham,

Not all cancers are created equal! Every type of cancer has its own distinctive traits and behavior when it comes to diagnosis, symptoms, genetics etc. Make sure your GP knows your family history so that both of you can act proactively if any symptoms or signs pertaining to colorectal pathology arrive.

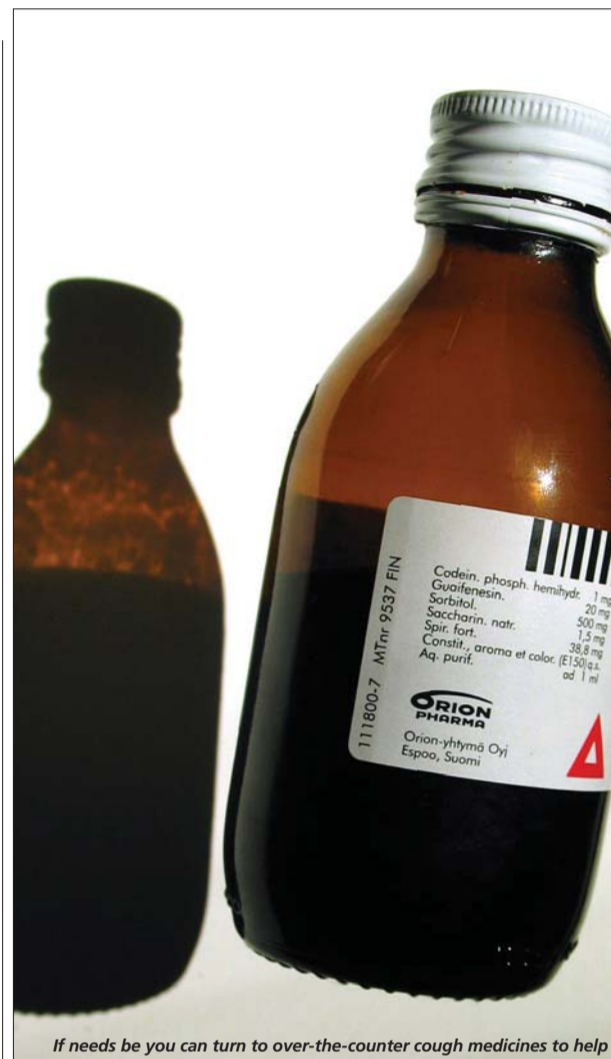
In its early stage, colorectal cancer usually produces no symptoms. The most likely warning signs include: changes in bowel movements, including persistent constipation or diarrhea, a feeling of not being able to empty the bowel completely, an urgency to move the bowels, rectal cramping, or rectal bleeding, dark patches of blood in or on stool; or long, thin, "pencil stools", unexplained fatigue, loss of appetite and/or weight loss, abdominal discomfort or bloating, pelvic pain occurs at later stages.

Finding colorectal cancer early is essential. There are many different tests used to screen for colorectal cancer as well as tests used to evaluate colon cancer.

Beginning at the age of 50 (earlier for some high-risk groups) everyone should be screened regularly for colorectal cancer.

The traditional screening routine was for the doctor to perform a digital rectal exam once a year and for you to collect three stool samples to be tested for traces of blood.

The current American Cancer screening guidelines for colon cancer in an average risk patient



If needs be you can turn to over-the-counter cough medicines to help

begin at the age of 50 and include: testing of stool samples for traces of blood yearly, a flexible sigmoidoscopy every five years, a double contrast barium enema every five years, and a colonoscopy every 10 years.

Dear Doctor De La Flor,

I've got a persistent cough. What tips do you have to help sort it out?

SINCERELY,
MARY

Dear Mary,

Cold and flu season brings on hacking coughs that can leave your chest aching. But colds and flu aren't the only problems that cause coughing. Allergies, asthma, acid reflux, dry air, and smoking are common causes of coughs. Even medications such as certain drugs for high blood pressure and allergies can cause a chronic cough.

Try these tips to manage your cough at

home and hopefully you save a visit to your doctor.

- **Stay hydrated.** An upper respiratory tract infection causes postnasal drip. Extra secretions trickle down the back of your throat, irritating it and sometimes causing a cough. Drinking liquids helps to keep the lining moist.

- **Try lozenges and hot drinks. Try a menthol cough drop.** It numbs the back of the throat and that will tend to decrease the cough reflex. Drinking warm tea with honey can also soothe the throat.

- **Take steamy showers and use a humidifier.** A hot shower can help a cough by loosening secretions in the nose. You can buy over-the-counter medication like SINUS (contains menthol, essence of eucalyptus and pine). This steamy strategy can help ease coughs not only from colds, but also from allergies and asthma. Humidifiers may also help. In a dry home, nasal secretions can become desiccated and uncomfortable. Putting

moisture back in the air can help your cough, but be careful not to overdo it.

- **Remove irritants in the air.** Perfumes and scented bathroom sprays may seem benign, but for some people they can cause chronic sinus irritation. The worst irritant in the air, of course, is smoke. Almost all smokers eventually develop the "smoker's cough". Unfortunately, second-hand smokers often pay the same price as well.

When steamy showers, hot teas, and cough drops don't help, you can turn to over-the-counter medicines to ease your cough.

- **Decongestants:** Decongestants relieve nasal congestion by shrinking swollen nasal tissue and reducing mucus production. They dry up mucus in the lungs and open up the airway passages. Overuse of decongestants can lead to excessive dryness, which can trigger a dry cough. Nasal sprays, if used for more than three to four days, can lead to 'rebound congestion'.

- **Cough suppressants and expectorants:** If you're coughing so much that your chest hurts and you're getting a bad night's sleep, consider a cough suppressant, such as dextromethorphan. Expectorants such as guaifenesin are useful when a person has a cough that is thick with phlegm.

Dr. De La Flor, G.P. is licensed in medicine & general surgery. He holds certificates in nutrition, medical exercise and human performance from the University of Berkeley in California, the American Council on Exercise and the U.S. National Strength & Conditioning Association. He is a strong believer in work/life balance and spends much of his time outside of his surgery on the tennis court or chasing his four kids around the neighborhood. 697.888.666

HealthExtra

Lack of staff

Doctor demand

- Don't be taken aback if you have to wait to get a doctor's appointment, a worrying 86 doctors positions are noted in the list of 'occupations that are difficult to fill' according to the latest Official State Bulletin.

Not surprisingly the Canaries are at the top of the list with a current need for 22 qualified doctors. General Practitioners are in most demand overall, with six of the 21 currently lacking needed in the Islands. Women and parents will also be unsurprised to know that paediatricians and gynaecologists are the specialists that are most lacking here.

The European Union and specifically the UK continue to tempt away qualified doctors with offers that the local market seems unable to meet as their own staff leak away to Canada and the United States. It is expected that this is a situation which can only get worse if Barack Obama's plans for a state national health system are finally passed, particularly as the country is apparently loath to spend federal funds in training more health service care providers.

Spanish National Union, CC.OO., claim that the latest listing is only a repeat of previous similar loggings of staff shortages and only reflects the necessity of creating a national register of health professionals to be able to define future necessities and design training and enrolment programmes accordingly.

Travel dangers

Virus by air

- A leading specialist in tropical illnesses in the Canaries, Basilio Valladares, claims that tourism and emigration are bringing infections to the West.

Cases of malaria, intestinal parasites, myiasis and Chagas' disease have been recorded in the Western world, he affirmed. Talking to a reporter from the EFE agency, Valladares remarked, "today, tropical illnesses travel by plane" explaining that in 24 hours there are diseases that, "can pass from deepest Asia to Washington".

In the Canaries the appearance of malaria and myiasis is increasingly frequent as are cases of rare insect and spider bites causing skin and intestine infections - all of which are beginning to cause important additional costs to the health system. Valladares has started a new association to promote the investigation into tropical and emerging illnesses linked to poverty. It is a non-profit making association formed with the intention of developing projects in Africa, South America and the Canaries.

Court decision

Compensation

- The Canarian health service has been ordered to pay out a large sum to parents whose child was permanently damaged at birth.

The payment order was recently ratified in the sum of €765,090.68 by the Canarian High Court for a lack of assistance during the birth process which caused acute damage to the child due to foetal suffering. The child, who was born in the University Hospital Nuestra Señora de la Candelaria in Tenerife, is now classed as severely disabled.