

## A Critical Look at Colorectal Cancer

### Regina Stanley, FNP

*Family Medicine, HopeHealth at FMU*



Beloved actor, Chadwick Boseman died in August 2020 at the age of 43 from colorectal cancer. A native of Anderson, South Carolina, Boseman had become a household name for his role as King T'Challa in Marvel's *Black Panther*, a comic book film praised for its celebration of Black culture and promotion of diverse representation within the superhero genre. *Black Panther* broke box office records and earned a gross of 1.3 billion by the end of its theatrical run.

Unknown to fans and even his colleagues, Boseman had been fighting a different kind of battle off-screen for four years with colorectal cancer. Despite multiple surgeries and chemotherapy, he sadly lost that battle after the cancer progressed from stage 3 in 2016 to stage 4 in 2020.

Chadwick Boseman's death from colorectal cancer was a devastating reminder that people must do their part to assess their risk, practice prevention, and get recommended screenings to detect cancer early.

### What is Colorectal Cancer?

Colorectal cancer refers to cancer of the large intestine and rectum, which are responsible for the absorption of water and salt from remaining food contents passing through your digestive tract, and the storage of waste until elimination when you have a bowel movement.

According to the American Cancer Society, an anticipated 52,580 people will die from colorectal cancer in 2022. Excluding skin cancers, colorectal cancer is the third most diagnosed cancer in the United States.

### Evaluating Risk Factors and Prioritizing Prevention

Here are some risk factors associated with colorectal cancer and some recommendations for ways you can reduce your risk of developing the disease.

**Lack of Exercise** - Studies show that a sedentary lifestyle can increase your chances of developing colorectal cancer. It is recommended that adults set a goal of 150 - 300 minutes of moderate exercise per week or 75 - 150 minutes of intense exercise weekly. In addition to reducing your risk for developing cancer, regular exercise helps prevent other significant diseases, such as heart disease and diabetes, and has mental health benefits as well.

**Diet** - Eating a diet rich in red meats (beef, pork, and lamb) and processed meats (hot dogs, packaged deli meats, beef jerky) increases colorectal cancer risk. Reducing consumption of red meats and processed meats can help to lower your risk for colorectal cancer and improve digestion.

**Obesity** - Carrying excess weight is linked with an increased likelihood for developing certain cancers, including colorectal cancer. According to the National Cancer Institute at the National Institutes of Health, people who are obese are about 30% more likely to develop colorectal cancer than people within a normal weight range. While obesity raises the risk for both men and women, the connection appears stronger in men.

Make dietary changes to include more fiber, found in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, lean meats, like chicken and fish, and plant-based proteins such as beans, peas, and legumes. Along with added activity, this can eliminate the pounds, mitigating your cancer risk, while also improving your overall health and mood.

**Tobacco and Alcohol Use** - Tobacco and alcohol use both increase your risk for multiple cancer types, including colorectal cancer. It is recommended to stop tobacco use, and limit alcohol use to two drinks per day for men and one drink per day for women.

**History of Colorectal Polyps or Colorectal Cancer** - People who have had polyps (tissue growths in the colon) or have been diagnosed and treated for colorectal cancer in the past are at a higher risk for developing disease and should get regular screenings as recommended by their healthcare provider.

**Family History** - Genetics play a strong role in what diseases we will encounter throughout our lives, and colorectal cancer is no exception. If your parents, grandparents, or siblings have ever been treated for colorectal cancer, your chances of developing it are much higher than those with no family history. Work to mitigate the risk factors mentioned above and create a plan with your health care provider for regular screenings to monitor your status and catch cancer early should it develop.

### **Achieving Better Outcomes Through Early Detection**

For the average person with no major risk factors or symptoms, it is recommended you begin regular screenings for colorectal cancer at age 45. This can be done with stool-based tests that look for indicators in a provided stool specimen, or through a visual exam using diagnostic imaging or a colonoscopy.

If you would like to learn more about your risk for colorectal cancer and are interested in screening, contact HopeHealth today to schedule your appointment.

*Regina Stanley is a family nurse practitioner serving patients at HopeHealth at Francis Marion University. From Marion, SC, Stanley is a member of the American Association of Nurse Practitioners, National Society of Leadership and Success, American Nurses Association, and South Carolina Nurses Association, and Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. She volunteers with the American Diabetes Association, American Heart Association, and the Marion Foxtrot Festival Board. She is a 2017 Palmetto Gold Nursing Award recipient.*

## **HopeHealth at Francis Marion Spotlight**



HopeHealth at Francis Marion University recognized February as American Heart Month by focusing on cardiovascular health quality measures! The Quality Focus includes controlling high blood pressure (HBP), Aspirin (ASA) use in Ischemic Vascular Disease, Statin (cholesterol-lowering drug) use in Coronary Artery Disease, and aortic aneurysm screenings. In an attempt to engage patients in improving their heart health, HopeHealth at FMU hosted a weekly drawing for a "Heart Healthy" Basket, which included a blood pressure monitor, an American Heart Association cookbook, a pill reminder pack, and several heart-healthy snacks. We had 90 entries and gave away 4 baskets.

Also, as part of our Partner with Patients phase of the American Medical Association M.A.P. Blood Pressure initiative, we are providing (while supplies last) all patients who require a repeat BP in our office with a personalized folder which includes their medication list as well as educational information about HBP, HBP medications, self-measured BP and BP logs, and sodium reduction (all materials were obtained from the AMA Target BP website). Patients are asked to keep a log of their BPs and bring their folders back with them to each visit. Additional educational literature will be provided at patient follow-ups.

Pictured are two of our Heart Healthy basket winners:  
Desiree Nettles with her daughter Maddison and Lindora James

## Exercise of the Month



This month, **Kayla Thompson** discusses resistance training in her Exercise of the Month article, and highlights just how much movement matters!

**[Check out the full article here.](#)**

*Kayla Thompson is a patient support representative at the HopeHealth Medical Plaza in Florence and is a certified exercise physiologist through the American College of Sports Medicine. She has a Master of Science in clinical exercise science.*

## Event Coming Soon

**[Register Today for the 11th Annual CAPES For Kids Run!](#)**

**Saturday, May 7, 2022**  
**Briggs Elementary School**  
**1012 Congaree Dr.**  
**Florence, SC 29501**



## HopeHealth Pediatrics Facebook Live

Join us on March 24 at 5:30 pm for a Facebook Live presentation for parents, "Healthy Habits" presented by Dr. Michael K. Foxworth II, pediatrician.

Food choices | Being physically active | Sleep  
Emotional support | Managing stress | More!

**Visit us on Facebook to watch!** Plus, enter into a drawing for a jogging stroller and a dome climber. Just attend the event in its duration, and post a comment or question. For questions about this event, call (843) 823-7364.



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