

Get Your Rear In Gear

LivON FOUNDATION WORKS TO RAISE AWARENESS ABOUT COLON CANCER FOR THOSE UNDER 50 | By K.H. Queen

If you're over 50, you probably have heard ad nauseam—or would that be ad poopem—about getting a colonoscopy to screen for colon cancer. Under 50, not so much.

After age 50, the American Cancer Society recommends screening for polyps and/or colon cancer. But people under 50 are unlikely to get a colonoscopy even if they're experiencing symptoms, says David Bostic, a board member of the LivON Foundation in Virginia Beach. Although only 12 percent of colon cancers are in people under 50, that percentage is growing, Bostic says.

The LivON Foundation aims to shed light where the sun doesn't shine. The foundation is raising awareness about colon cancer for those under 50 and helping families impacted by the disease, he says.

LivON is named for Bostic's wife, Olivia "Liv" Naples Bostic, to reflect her nickname and initials. Sadly, Liv didn't live on; she was diagnosed with colon cancer the day after her 38th birthday and died less than two years later on July 30, 2014. Liv and David had been married less than four years.

"It used to be colon cancer was mostly an over-50 kind of thing," Bostic says. "It's decreasing in that population because most physicians will say, 'You're over 50; let's go get a colonoscopy.' We're finding that you can have all these symptoms at age 35, but doctors aren't as aware of colon cancer yet in people under 50. If Liv had been over 50, they would have imme-

diately done something. But even if we had known some of the warning signs, you really don't think of colon cancer as being a problem at age 38. We want to inform others that if you're under 50 and you're having gastro-intestinal problems, you need to question your physician and ask for additional help. We need to get a message out."

This is the time—March is Colon Cancer Awareness Month. This is the place—Coastal Virginia earned the dubious distinction of third nationwide in colon cancer deaths, according to a study published last year in *Cancer Epidemiology, Biomarkers & Prevention*.

The foundation started as a way to help Liv. Bostic estimates her health care in her last 21 months cost about \$1.5 million, of which they paid about \$60,000 out of pocket. But Liv was adamant that the foundation not be about her.

A sedentary lifestyle is one of the risk factors for colon cancer. Liv, however, didn't qualify. She had run a 10-miler in 67 minutes 11 months before being diagnosed, Bostic says. Likely, she already had the cancer on race day.

"Being in shape and eating right helps reduce the risk of cancer," Bostic says. "But it never eliminates the possibility."

As part of its work, the foundation is striving to educate the physicians, local groups and the general public about colon cancer, especially for those under 50. LivON will have a booth March 18–20 during the

Shamrock Marathon weekend in Virginia Beach.

LivON also helps families with members under 50 who are dealing with colon cancer. In 2015, the group gave more than \$25,000 in support to these families. Many use the funds to help pay their share of medical bills. One family took one last vacation, to Disney World, before the husband and father passed away from the disease.

"That trip is something the kids will never forget," Bostic says. "We do whatever we can to make their lives a little easier."

Although LivON focuses on colon cancer, its message goes beyond one specific kind of cancer, Bostic says.

"You need to know the signs and symptoms of colon cancer, but also be aware of your whole body," he says. "If something is not correct, don't put off dealing with it."

For more about LivON Foundation, visit LivONFoundation.org.

Symptoms of Colon Cancer

Blood in stool • Change in bowel habits, including diarrhea or constipation
Unexplained abdominal pain • Skinny stools
Weakness or fatigue • Feeling that your bowel doesn't empty completely • Feeling that you need to go and go

KNOW THE SYMPTOMS OF COLON CANCER



The LivON Foundation provides awareness for the symptoms and prevention of Colon Cancer in honor of **Olivia Naples Bostic**. LivON also provides financial support to those 50 and younger in Hampton Roads battling Colon Cancer.

Facts: Colon Cancer kills more than 50,000 people each year. Incidence rates of Colon Cancer are on the rise for individuals 50 and younger. Hampton Roads is considered a "hot-bed" for Colon Cancer with a 9% higher rate of mortality than the rest of the country.

Symptoms include:

- Blood in stool
- Constipation
- Change in bowel habits
- Unexplained abdominal pain
- Narrow stool
- Feeling that you need to go and go...
- No Symptoms at all!

Your symptoms might appear to be minimal, but don't ignore them. Although these may not always be linked to Colon Cancer, awareness of your tush is important!

Prevention

- Reduce intake of red and processed meats
- Eat your greens and veggies
- Get more fiber and vitamins naturally in your food
- Choose unprocessed foods
- Nothing good comes in a box!
- Stay active...get at least 30 minutes of exercise a day
- Combat belly fat! A large waist line is a risk factor
- Stop smoking
- Get your colonoscopy!
(They aren't that bad anymore!)



All information is not a substitute for speaking to your doctor and is not designed to diagnose, treat or cure any disease. Talk to your doctor!

LivON is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit foundation. • livonfoundation.org