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**LEESBURG | THE VILLAGES | TAVARES | CLERMONT**

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## **Fear of Colorectal Cancer Screening Way “Off Base”**

“Colorectal cancer is the fourth most common cancer in men, after skin, prostate, and lung cancer,” said Dr. Ismail. “But more men are afraid of the screening than they are of the disease.”

“Colorectal cancer has excellent cure rates if detected early. If we find polyps before they become cancerous, we may actually prevent cancer from forming,” said Dr. Ismail, who has successfully performed more than 50,000 such procedures.

While it’s important to know the signs and symptoms, the problem is sometimes there are none in the early stages of the disease. So to find polyps or early colorectal cancer early, people in their 50s and older should be screened. Those at higher-than-average risk because of family history or earlier polyps should talk with their doctor about whether to have screening tests before age 50, what tests to have, their benefits and risks, and how often to schedule appointments.

Symptoms when they do exist may include blood in the stool, an unexpected blood loss, a change in bowel habits (that is, a change in what is normal for you since this differs from person to person), and abdominal pain.

Recently, Medicare and other insurance carriers agreed to pay for screening colonoscopies – the gold-standard of colorectal cancer screenings – for individuals over 50 without symptoms.

“Most men would rather be hit in the head with a fastball than schedule an exam. The prep takes about a day and is the part most people are concerned about. However, it’s worth it. The screening is performed easily and painlessly under sedation, and recovery time is very short. “Making the effort is a small ‘sacrifice’ that can keep you in the game a long time.”