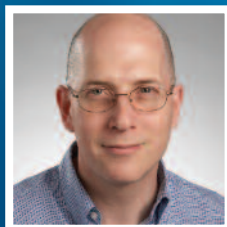


MERCY'S LIVE

WEBCAST

colonoscopy

Mercy helped spread an important message about cancer prevention when the hospital partnered May 4 with KCRG-TV to broadcast a “live” colonoscopy online.



Dean Abramson, MD
Medical Director for Mercy's
Digestive Health Center
Gastroenterologists, P.C.

When caught early, colon cancer has an almost 90 percent cure rate, but many people put off having this simple procedure because they are unsure what it involves.

Kris Sargent, oncology nurse and manager of Mercy Regional Cancer Center, wanted to encourage people to have colonoscopies, so she volunteered to have her procedure shown live online in observance of her 50th birthday—the age at which doctors recommend most people have their first colon cancer screening. She says the preparation, as well as the actual colonoscopy, were “not that bad, were very simple and didn't hurt at all.”

Dr. Dean Abramson, Medical Director for Mercy's Digestive Health Center, removed two polyps from Kris' colon. After performing a biopsy on the polyps, it was found that one polyp was benign (non-cancerous) and the other was an adenoma (pre-cancerous).

Adenoma is not uncommon and, at the stage it was discovered, not harmful to Kris. Because adenomatous polyps can lead to cancer, having it removed may have saved Kris from developing colon cancer—the third most common type of cancer.

What's next for Kris? After undergoing this simple procedure, Kris can live her life knowing she is colon-cancer free. Because one of the polyps found was pre-cancerous, Dr. Abramson recommends a follow-up screening in three years. Kris says that, unfortunately, many people don't follow their physician's recommendations—but she promises she will.

Mercy is the first hospital in the state, and one of the few in the country, to broadcast a live preventive cancer screening for the purpose of generating potentially life-saving awareness.

More than 1,200 people tuned in to the webcast shown on both Mercy's and KCRG-TV's websites. If you missed it, you can still watch it on Mercy's website at www.mercycare.org. The webcast gained attention on several health-focused websites, such as www.getyourrearingear.com.



Missing Mom

No matter how old a daughter is, she wants the loving support of a mother's love.

Hospice of Mercy recently began offering a free bereavement support series, Mother Loss: Grieving Daughters, especially for daughters who, as adults, experienced the death of their mother.

Group participant Marlene Burns, a retired Lincoln High School coordinator at Kirkwood Community College, lost her mom about five years ago. Marlene says she tried a traditional grief support group but “specific support groups, like this one, more closely target the types of emotions you experience. I lost my best friend, someone I confided in and talked to several times a week. No matter how old you are, your mom is your mom.”

Pam Rairdin, a Mercy hospice nurse and group participant, has had a lot of professional experience with death, but she had never experienced the intense personal grief she felt when her mother passed away in January 2010.

“A lot of family dynamics change after the loss of your mother. It changes everything, no matter what age you are,” says Pam, noting that her mother was the hub for her family.

Oftentimes daughters are so busy with all the formalities of the service and details like settling estates that the full extent of their grief may be delayed—sometimes for years. Marlene says, “You don't take the time at that time because there are a lot of things you need to

do – things are surreal. It takes time to accept.”

Coming from a family that does not freely talk about their feelings, Pam wasn't able to get the support she needed from family. The Mother Loss support group intrigued her and participants helped her by offering their own “coping mechanisms and words of wisdom.” Members are able to freely express their emotions in this nurturing environment, and Kleenex boxes are strategically placed in the room as tears frequently flow.

Marlene notes, “Grief is an individual thing, but as you share it with other people in a similar experience there is a comfort in knowing you are not the only one. Being a part of that group allowed a comfort level to be able to cry and express our feelings of loneliness and sadness.

“There are things that trigger sadness and there is no timeline that says ‘I'm five years down the road so I can't feel those feelings any more.’ You have to go through it and deal with it, as hard and sad as it is. It's much easier to go through something with friends.”

At the end of Pam and Marlene's four-class series, participants hugged and decided they didn't want their meetings to end and they continue to meet occasionally.

Mother Loss group meetings feature discussions, journal writing and readings. For more information, please call the Hospice of Mercy Bereavement Office at (319) 398-6735.

