

## Santa Rosa – First Colon Cancer Free Zone in Sonoma County



On February 15, 2005, City of Santa Rosa Mayor Jane Bender read a proclamation that declared March as Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month and proclaimed the City of Santa Rosa Council and employees a "Colon Cancer Free Zone." This action was taken, with the encouragement of the American Cancer Society, to help save lives. A Colon Cancer Free Zone is a community education project to promote awareness, early detection and prevention of colorectal cancer.

Colorectal cancer is the third most common cancer among both men and women. It is the second deadliest cancer and nationwide, more than 50,000 people will lose their battle with colon cancer this year.

“There is no reason for this,” explained American Cancer Society volunteer, Sheryl Khoo, who made the presentation to City Council. “If found early, it is very curable. Most important, colorectal cancer can be PREVENTED. People are embarrassed to talk about it,” notes Khoo. “And this could cost you pain, suffering and ultimately, your life.”

Talk to your doctor about getting screened if you are over 50. You are at greater risk of getting colon cancer if you are not physically active, eat red meat often, have a family history of colon cancer or polyps, or have inflammatory bowel disease. Your doctor can determine which screening type, such as colonoscopy or sigmoidoscopy, is right for you. Removal of precancerous polyps detected by screening can prevent cancer. Screening can also detect colon cancer at an earlier, more curable, stage.

At the Council meeting, Mayor Bender spoke openly about her colonoscopy and challenged the other council members to think about their screening.

“Men and women right here in our community are at risk, and we believe we can save lives with appropriate education and intervention,” said Sheryl Khoo. “We are thrilled that Santa Rosa Council members and the Mayor care enough about their community to take this action. We hope other Sonoma County communities will follow suit.”

Polypman sits in Mayor Bender's office to remind everyone:

- to not be embarrassed,
- learn about colorectal cancer,
- talk to your doctor about when you should get screened, and
- prevent this cancer.



To learn all you need to know about colon cancer, contact the American Cancer Society at 1-800-ACS-2345 or visit [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org). You may also call Sheryl Khoo at the Santa Rosa office at 545-6728 ext. 16.

Mayor Bender with Sheryl Khoo on her left and Laura Moss from the ACS on her right

