



Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month 2009

Colorectal Cancer

**Are you “ignoring a gut feeling”?..... A comedian’s take.
Issued by Matrix Advertising**

“How on earth do we broach this topic! It’s been said that laughter is the best medicine. I’ve even heard of people laughing ‘their butts off’. So I guess this is why I decided to take up this challenge: Cancer, but not just any cancer my friend: Colorectal Cancer” says David Newton.

About Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month (CCAM)

Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month is a global initiative that takes place annually in March, **(in South Africa in April)** and aims to increase public awareness about the symptoms, detection and prevention of Colorectal Cancer, encouraging people aged 50 years and over, to reduce their risk of Colorectal Cancer through regular screening examinations.

Our theme for this year’s Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month is “Ignoring a Gut Feeling,” and in answer to the challenge of heightening this awareness to the public, prominent South African comedian, David Newton, was approached to help convey this rather sensitive topic.

David tackled this by calling a spade a spade, at the launch of the Colorectal Cancer Comedy Evening at “On Broadway” Theatre in Cape Town on Monday 16 March 2009. David entertained the full house, encouraging the audience to have regular screenings.

The success of this launch has resulted in the extension of this theme throughout 2009, with additional shows scheduled in Cape Town on the 4 & 11 May at On Broadway, in Johannesburg from the 19-31 May at the Civic Centre, in Grahamstown (National Arts Festival from 2-11 July) and Cape Town in the latter half of this year.

The hope is that the barriers and taboos related to discussing this topic would be overcome. David Newton, a prominent comedian and personality, has taken on this challenge of increasing public awareness for Colorectal Cancer, as part of his CSR (Corporate, Social, Responsibility) Project. He has decided that the best way to approach this topic, is to laugh about it!

Yet looking at the numbers colorectal cancer is definitely no laughing matter. Approximately one million new cases are diagnosed worldwide each year. Colorectal cancer is the third most common cause of death from cancer across all cancer types in men and women worldwide, killing around 700,000 people worldwide, each year.

Colorectal cancer, also known as bowel cancer, colon cancer, and rectal cancer, can occur anywhere in the colon or rectum. Cancer develops when the normal process of renewal among the cells lining the bowel is interrupted. A tumour may form which, if detected at an early stage, can be removed.

Symptoms include pain in the abdomen and rectum, unexplained weight loss, blood in or on stools and a change in normal bowel habits that last for longer than 6 weeks and a feeling of not having emptied your bowel properly after a bowel motion.

Risk factors revolve around a poor diet, lack of exercise, obesity, family history of colorectal cancer and age, with risk increasing in people over 50.

Colorectal cancer can be managed and early detection is the key. Identifying personal risk factors, monitoring for symptomatic changes and undergoing screening are three ways that can help to detect and prevent colorectal cancer. Colorectal Cancer screening can detect both existing cancer and polyps (growths that may develop into cancer over time). Regular screening has been shown to reduce the risk of dying from bowel cancer by 16%.

Further information about Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month and the global activities that have taken place can be found at <http://www.preventcancer.org/colorectal.htm> and <http://www.europacol.com>. Further information on South Africa’s Colorectal Awareness month can be found at www.gutfeeling.co.za.

Better yet, contact Matrix Advertising for further information or to arrange an interview with David Newton.

NB. Don’t forget to join our Facebook group (Ignoring a Gut Feeling) to show your support.