“Weird Looking Stools” in Bars Spark Talks About Colon Cancer

Georgia CORE’s “Weird Looking Stools” campaign raises awareness of colon cancer symptoms and encourages screening.

October 29, 2025 By Laura Schmidt

Georgians visiting their local bar or coffee shop might be inclined to pull up a chair and chat about colon cancer. That’s thanks to “Weird Looking Stools,” a statewide initiative by nonprofit Georgia CORE (Center for Oncology Research and Education) to raise awareness of colon cancer and destigmatize getting screened.

Georgia CORE partnered with visual artist Julian Scalia who designed uniquely shaped and painted stools (the kind you sit on) that represent real-life colon cancer symptoms. The stools have been placed in 30 bars across Georgia to spark important conversations about colon cancer. Next to each stool is a QR code that folks can scan with their phones to get linked to resources and local screening information.

Many people with colon cancer do not develop symptoms until its late stages, when it is harder to treat. This is why preventive screenings are so important. Early detection and treatment of colon cancer increases the likelihood of long-term survival.

The “weird stools” represent colon cancer symptoms such as:

- Blood in the stool;
- Narrow or pencil-thin stools;
- Persistent abdominal pain or cramps;
- Unexplained weight loss;
- Iron deficiency (anemia.)

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“If you see a weird stool in your local bar, it’s more than a conversation starter—it’s a reminder to check for symptoms,” said Lynn Durham, president and CEO of Georgia CORE, in a press release. “Colon cancer is one of the most preventable cancers if caught early. This campaign is about making people stop, look and take action.”

Colon cancer, also known as colorectal cancer, develops when cells grow out of control in the colon or rectum, sections of the large intestine. Colorectal is the fourth most common form of cancer and second leading cause of cancer-related death in the United States, despite being largely preventable through screening. Yet barriers to screening persist for many people.

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This year, about 107,320 U.S. adults are estimated to be diagnosed with colorectal cancer and nearly 47,000 people will die of the disease, according to the American Cancer Society. What's more, early-onset cases are rising among Georgians under age 50.

The "Weird Looking Stools" campaign launched on September 15 with an event sponsored by the Georgia Society of Clinical Oncology and will continue through November 30.

Atlanta establishments participating in the initiative include Park Bar, Black Coffee, Fado's Irish Pub (Buckhead and Midtown), The Beverly and Atlantic Grill, along with participating restaurants in Athens, Valdosta, Macon and Gainesville.

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Georgia CORE works closely with five regional coalitions and federally qualified health centers to ensure that people can access screenings and follow-up care regardless of insurance status.

If you find a weird stool in the wild, scan its QR code or visit WeirdLookingStools.com to learn about symptoms, screening guidelines and local resources.

To learn more, click #Colon Cancer or #Cancer Screening. There, you'll see headlines such as "Does Fish Oil Lower Colon Cancer Risk? It May Depend on Your Genes," "Sugary Drinks May Increase Risk of Metastasis in Advanced Colorectal Cancer" and "American Cancer Society and NFL's Crucial Catch Initiative Works to Improve Cancer Screening Rates."

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