

Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month

March is Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month. This is a great time to learn more about the importance of colorectal health. Colorectal cancer is the second leading cause of cancer deaths in the US that affects both men and women. The good news is that colon cancer is more treatable, and sometimes even curable, with early detection from screening.



There are various screening tests for colorectal cancers such as FIT test, Cologuard and colonoscopy. It is important to know that research studies have not shown one type is clearly better than another in terms of reducing death from colorectal cancer. Discuss with your Primary Care Provider which option is best for you and how often you should be screened given your health history.

Activity #1 – Colorectal Cancer Fact Sheet

Read through the following colorectal cancer fact sheet and use this information to gain new knowledge and discuss anything further with your provider.

Activity #2 – Wear Blue Day, Friday March 4

National Wear Blue Day for colorectal cancer awareness is the Friday, March 4. Show support by wearing blue. See if your team or family will join you!

Activity #3 – Move with a Doc, Tuesday, March 8 at 12pm

Join Dr. Shah in our Move with Doc series to learn more about the signs, symptoms and treatment of colon cancer, as well as important prevention measures. You're encouraged to use this as an opportunity to learn and move your body in any way of your choosing while you listen! Click [here](#) to register! Missed the live webinar? Check out the [video library](#) and scroll to the Move with a Doc section.

Activity #4 – Throwin' for Colons

Organize a Throwin' for Colons competition. Players will throw cereal into a cup and try to get as many in as possible in one minute. A diet high in vegetables, fruit and whole grains has been linked with a decreased risk of colon and rectal cancer. Cereal can be high in whole grains and fiber. Scroll down to the last page for supplies, object of the game, and rules.

For questions or more information, please email wellness@wellfirstbenefits.com

Colorectal Cancer Fact Sheet



- Colorectal cancer is cancer of the colon or rectum, both parts of the large intestine, and are often grouped together because they have many features in common.
- Colorectal cancer affects men and women of all racial and ethnic groups.
- Colorectal cancer is most prevalent in people who are 45 years old or older.
- Screening tests are used to look for colon cancer or polyps when a person may not have symptoms.
- Symptoms may include: Blood in or on stool; pains, aches or cramps in stomach that don't go away; unknown weight loss. Talk with your doctor immediately if you experience these symptoms.
- The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force currently recommends screening beginning at age 45 for people at average risk for colorectal cancer.
- People with average risk can use any method to get screened:
 - Stool-based methods like FIT testing or Cologuard can be done at home, and do not require preparation by taking laxatives the night before. These tests have to be repeated more frequently than screening colonoscopy.
 - Colonoscopy does require a laxative to prepare and involves sedation. But people with average risk and a normal screening colonoscopy don't have to repeat it for 10 years.
- Some individuals with higher risk should start screening before age 45 with colonoscopy. Family history and personal health may determine when you should begin screening. For example:
 - You may have an increased risk of colorectal cancer if you have inflammatory bowel disease, Crohn's disease, or ulcerative colitis.
 - You may have an increased risk of colorectal cancer if you have certain genetic syndromes, like familial adenomatous polyposis (FAP) or hereditary non-polyposis colorectal cancer (also known as Lynch syndrome).
- A colonoscopy can find and remove precancerous polyps/abnormal growths in the colon or rectum before they turn into cancer—and thereby prevent cancer.

Lowering Your Risk Lifestyle Changes



Watch Your Weight: Being obese or overweight increases your risk of developing and dying from colon or rectal cancer. Physical activity and eating a diet high in vegetables, fruits and whole grains can help regulate weight.

Eat a lot of Vegetables, Fruits, and Whole Grains: Having a diet that includes a lot of vegetables, fruits and whole grains has been linked to a decreased risk of colorectal cancer. On the flip side, having a diet high in red meats and processed meats (some deli meat and hotdogs) are linked to an increase risk for colorectal cancer.

Limit Alcohol Consumption: The American Cancer Society recommends no more than 2 drinks a day for men and 1 drink a day for women. A single drink amounts to 12 ounces of beer, 5 ounces of wine or 1½ ounces of 80-proof distilled spirits (hard liquor).

Move Your Body Regularly: You may have a higher risk of developing colon or rectal cancer if you are not physically active. There are some studies showing that increasing your movement may help lower your risk.

Don't Smoke: Long-term smokers are more likely than non-smokers to develop and die from colon or rectal cancer.

Throwin' for Colons Game Rules



Supplies:

- Red Solo cup (or similar sized cup)
- Countertop or kitchen table
- Cheerios (or similar cereal)

Object of the Game:

- Throw the most cheerios/cereal in your cup in one minute.

Rules:

- Place your cup at the edge of a kitchen table or countertop
- Stand 5 feet away from cup
- Throw as many cheerios into the cup as you can in one minute
- Technique of throwing is up to you!

Play with coworkers, family, or friends to socialize and bring awareness to colorectal health!

To implement at your workplace:

Encourage leaders to compete against each other in a game for all to watch and cheer them on! Ask your organization about offering prizes to those who participate and/or attend. (Ex. The leader who wins the tournament will win a small prize for their team.)