

March



National Health Observances



Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month

Sponsor: Prevent Cancer Foundation

(http://www.preventcancer.org/colorectal3c.aspx?id=1048&ekmense1=15074e5e_94_01048_2) 

Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month is a time to encourage everyone over the age of 50 to get screened regularly for colorectal cancer.

Colorectal cancer is cancer of the rectum or colon. It's the second leading cause of cancer-related death for both men and women.

People over the age of 50 are at the highest risk for colorectal cancer. Other risk factors include:

- Growths (called polyps) inside the colon
- Family history of colorectal cancer
- Smoking
- Health conditions like Crohn's Disease
- Being African-American

Here's the good news: you can reduce your risk if you get screened for colorectal cancer starting at the age of 50. You can also reduce your risk of colorectal cancer by:

- Getting active
- Eating healthy
- Quitting smoking

Get the Word Out

Sample Media and/or Newsletter or Listserv Announcement

Cut and paste this text into your newsletter, listserv, or press release. Add local details and quotes from your organization.

Colorectal cancer is the second most deadly cancer for both men and women. Yet according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, most of these deaths could be prevented if everyone over the age of 50 got screened for colorectal cancer. The best way to prevent colorectal cancer is to get screened. There are often no signs or symptoms of colorectal cancer. If left undiagnosed or undetected, colorectal cancer can spread throughout the body.

To increase awareness of colorectal cancer screenings, **[your organization]** is proudly participating in Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month. Locally, **[fill in statistics]** are affected by colorectal cancer.

- Add details about your local activities.
- Include quote from your organization.

The Department of Health and Human Services states that colorectal cancer screening tests can detect cancer early, when treatment is very successful.

People over age 50 are at highest risk for colorectal cancer. Other risk factors include smoking, having a family history of colorectal cancer, and being African American. African Americans are more likely to die from colorectal cancer than any other group in the nation. Everyone can take these healthy steps to help prevent colorectal cancer:



- Get screened.
- Quit smoking and stay away from secondhand smoke.
- Get active and eat healthy.







For more information, visit **[insert your organization information]**.



Is your organization on Twitter? Send tweets.

Sample tweets: Tips to Prevent Colorectal Cancer

The messages below are sample tweets. To send them via Twitter, click on the URL link provided after the “Tweet this message” phrase. Or, copy the message and paste it to your Twitter Stream and click post.

- Starting at age 50, get tested regularly for colorectal cancer. Learn more: <http://1.usa.gov/mSvbsm> [Tweet this message: <http://twitter.com/share?url=http://1.usa.gov/mSvbsm&text=Starting+at+age+50,+get+tested+regularly+for+colorectal+cancer.+Learn+more:> 
- Q. What are screenings? A. Screenings are medical tests that look for diseases before you have symptoms. More: <http://1.usa.gov/mGOVs2>
[Tweet this message: <http://twitter.com/share?url=http://1.usa.gov/mGOVs2&text=Q.+What+are+screenings?+A.+Screenings+are+medical+tests+that+look+for+diseases+before+you+have+symptoms.> 

- 10 questions to ask your doctor about health screenings: <http://1.usa.gov/jm7tM5>. [Tweet this message: <http://twitter.com/share?url=http://1.usa.gov/jm7tM5&text=10+questions+to+ask+your+doctor+about+health+screenings:> 
- Looking for good, healthy recipes? @CDC_eHealth has a recipe creator specifically for fruits and veggies: <http://1.usa.gov/iFtKbw>. [Tweet this message: http://twitter.com/share?url=http://1.usa.gov/iFtKbw&text=Looking+for+good,+healthy+recipes?+@CDC_eHealth+has+a+recipe+creator+specifically+for+fruits+and+veggies: 
- Planning a grocery store trip this weekend? Prevent colorectal cancer by choosing foods low in fat and full of calcium and fiber. [Tweet this message: <http://twitter.com/share?url=http://bit.ly/10yobv&text=Planning+a+grocery+store+trip?+Prevent+colorectal+cancer+by+choosing+foods+low+in+fat+and+full+of+calcium+and+fiber.> 
- Share your newfound love for fruits and veggies with a loved one. Here's a free e-card just for you: <http://1.usa.gov/mtAKXf> [Tweet this message: <https://twitter.com/intent/tweet?text=Share+your+new+found+love+for+fruits+and+veggies+with+a+loved+one.+Here+is+a+free+e-card+just+for+you:> 
- Health Tip: Next time you go shopping, buy a variety of fruits and vegetables in different colors. [Tweet this message: <http://twitter.com/share?text=Health+Tip:+Next+time+you+go+shopping,+buy+a+variety+of+fruits+and+vegetables+in+different+colors.> 
- Did you know? Walking for 10 minutes burns about 50 calories? More ways physical activity keeps a healthy weight: <http://1.usa.gov/AfmhHF>. [Tweet this message: <https://twitter.com/intent/tweet?text=Did+you+know?+Walking+for+10+minutes+burns+about+50+calories?+More+ways+physical+activity+keeps+a+healthy+weight:> 

- Take action to get active. Find your fitness level and see what you can do starting today: <http://1.usa.gov/iFt90r>. [Tweet this message: <http://twitter.com/share?url=http://1.usa.gov/iFt90r&text=Take+action+to+get+active.+Find+your+fitness+level+and+see+what+you+can+do+starting+today:> 
- Health Tip: Write down your reasons for quitting smoking. More actionable steps: <http://1.usa.gov/yGT5LC>. [Tweet this message: <https://twitter.com/intent/tweet?text=Health+Tip:+Write+down+your+reasons+for+quitting+smoking.+More+actionable+steps:&url=http://1.usa.gov/yGT5LC> 

Send e-cards

- healthfinder.gov: Eat Healthy (<http://healthfinder.gov/ecards/DisplayCard.aspx?CardID=8>)
- healthfinder.gov: Be Active (<http://healthfinder.gov/ecards/DisplayCard.aspx?CardID=4>)
- healthfinder.gov: Get Screened (<http://healthfinder.gov/ecards/DisplayCard.aspx?CardID=9>)
- healthfinder.gov: Quit Smoking (<http://healthfinder.gov/ecards/DisplayCard.aspx?CardID=13>)
- CDC: Colorectal cancer screening saves lives (<http://www2c.cdc.gov/ecards/message/message.asp?cardid=117&category=230>)
- CDC: I got screened. Now it's your turn. (<http://www2c.cdc.gov/ecards/message/message.asp?cardid=168&category=230>)
- View more E-cards (<http://healthfinder.gov/ecards/cards.aspx>)

Post a Web Badge

Add this free Web badge (<http://healthfinder.gov/nho/nhoBadges.aspx#mar>) to your Web site, blog, or social networking profile to show your support for Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month.

Get Involved

Take action to prevent colorectal cancer.

1. Contact local doctors' offices and ask them to share colorectal cancer prevention information with their patients.

2. Host a Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month event at a local senior center. Give out information about colorectal screenings, spread the word about how staying active can help prevent colorectal cancer, and ask a doctor or nurse to talk about the importance of getting screened.
3. Hold a cooking demonstration with low-fat foods full of calcium (<http://dietary-supplements.info.nih.gov/factsheets/calcium.asp#h3>) and fiber (<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/002470.htm#Food Sources>).
4. Host an information night at your local library to talk about ways to get more people in your community screened for colorectal cancer.
5. Provide free information and resources to local African American community organizations and events, such as churches, neighborhood block parties, associations, etc.

Adapted from the Prevent Cancer Foundation.

Contact the Prevent Cancer Foundation


(http://www.preventcancer.org/colorectal3c.aspx?id=1048&ekmense1=15074e5e_94_0_1048_2) at info@preventcancer.org for more information and materials.

Related Tools on healthfinder.gov

- Get Tested for Colorectal Cancer (<http://healthfinder.gov/prevention/ViewTopic.aspx?topicId=15>)
- Colorectal Cancer Screening: Conversation starters (<http://healthfinder.gov/prevention/ViewTool.aspx?toolId=36>)
- Colorectal Cancer Screening: Questions for the doctor (<http://healthfinder.gov/prevention/ViewTool.aspx?toolId=41>)
- Get Active (<http://healthfinder.gov/prevention/ViewTopic.aspx?topicId=22>)
- Quit Smoking (<http://healthfinder.gov/prevention/ViewTopic.aspx?topicId=24>)
- Eat Healthy (<http://healthfinder.gov/prevention/ViewTopic.aspx?topicId=21>)
- Men: Take Charge of Your Health (<http://www.healthfinder.gov/prevention/ViewTopic.aspx?topicId=74>)

Personal Health Tools

- Colorectal Cancer Risk Assessment Tool (<http://www.cancer.gov/colorectalcancerrisk/Default.aspx>)

- Colorectal Cancer Risk-Understanding the Puzzle (http://understandingrisk.cancer.gov/a_Colon/02.cfm)
- Assess Your Physical Activity (<https://www.choosemyplate.gov/SuperTracker/default.aspx>)
- Be Active Your Way Widget (<http://www.healthfinder.gov/widgets/>)
- Daily Food and Activity Diary (http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/obesity/lose_wt/diaryint.htm)
- Fiber Calculator (<http://www.healthcalculators.org/calculators/fiber.asp>) 
- Interactive Facts About Smoking Tutorial (<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/tutorials/smokingthefacts/htm/index.htm>)
- myhealthfinder personalized screening recommendations (<http://www.healthfinder.gov/prevention/myHealthfinder.aspx>)

More Information (Health A-Z)

- Colorectal Cancer (<http://healthfinder.gov/scripts/SearchContext.asp?topic=187>)

Resources

- Prevent Cancer Foundation (http://www.preventcancer.org/colorectal3c.aspx?id=1048&ekmense1=15074e5e94_0_1048_2) 
Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month Sponsor
- Medicare: Colon Cancer Screenings (Colorectal) (<http://www.medicare.gov/navigation/manage-your-health/preventive-services/colon-cancer-screening.aspx>)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Colorectal (Colon) Cancer: Basic Information (http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/Colorectal/basic_info/)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Colorectal Cancer Screening Saves Lives Brochure (PDF – 2.27MB) (http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/colorectal/pdf/SFL_brochure.pdf)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Colorectal Cancer Control Program Contact Information (http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/dccp_Programs/default.aspx?NPID=4)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Personal Screening Stories (http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/colorectal/basic_info/stories.htm) 

- Asian Pacific Islander Community Health Forum, Bilingual Brochure Tackles Colorectal Cancer (PDF - 1.2MB) (<http://www.apiahf.org/sites/default/files/CD-Toolkit06-2009.pdf>)
- Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Minority Health, Cancer and African Americans
(<http://minorityhealth.hhs.gov/templates/content.aspx?ID=2826>)
- Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Minority Health, Colorectal Cancer, Catch it Early, Get Screened!
(<http://minorityhealth.hhs.gov/templates/content.aspx?ID=4952&lvl=3&lvlID=316>)
- National Institutes of Health, National Cancer Institute, Colorectal Cancer Screening (PDQ®)
(<http://www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/pdq/screening/colorectal/HealthProfessional>)
- National Institutes of Health, National Cancer Institute, Colorectal Cancer Screening Fact Sheet [Also available in Spanish]
(<http://www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/factsheet/Detection/colorectal-screening>)
- National Institutes of Health, National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases, National Digestive Diseases Information Clearinghouse, What I need to know about Colon Polyps
(http://digestive.niddk.nih.gov/ddiseases/pubs/colonpolyps_ez/)

Tips to Plan a National Health Observance

Each National Health Observance (NHO) presents an opportunity to educate the public, energize co-workers and community members, and promote healthy behaviors. The NHO toolkits (<http://www.healthfinder.gov/nho/>) have the information and tools you need to get started.

Use the tips in this guide to plan a successful health promotion event.

Planning:

Planning is critical to the success of any outreach effort. Contact the NHO sponsoring organization several months ahead of time to request up-to-date information and materials. (Contact information for each month's sponsoring organization is provided in each toolkit).

- Consider enlisting the help of a community partner to help you plan and promote your event.
- Meet with those who will be valuable in your event coordination. To get started, sit down with potential partners, such as local businesses, local government

agencies, key leaders, organizations, and media partners who share an interest in the NHO.

- Recruit volunteers, speakers, and community liaisons.
- Develop new or adapt existing materials to distribute at the event.
- Be sure to get them printed and/or copied in advance.
- Conduct a run-through before the event.

Promoting:

Develop a publicity and media outreach plan. Designate a media contact from your planning team and make sure they are available to answer questions and follow up on media requests.

- Start by creating a local media list.
- Use local access television, radio, newspaper, and community calendars to promote your event.
- Post event announcements on your Web site. Encourage your partners to post similar announcements on their Web sites.
- Send a press release.
- Engage the media by offering a spokesperson from your organization or the community.
- Post flyers or posters throughout the community: on bulletin boards at local community centers, places of worship, the library, post office, local schools, recreation centers, clinics, pharmacies, stores, and businesses.
- Send flyers to each participating organization for distribution.

On the Day of the Event:

- Set up tables, chairs, and a check-in table prior to your event.
- Make plenty of sign-in sheets. Create a separate sign-in sheet for members of the media.
- Don't forget the refreshments!
- Make signs to direct participants and reporters to your event.


Tracking Media Coverage:

If you are distributing information to the media, plan ahead of time to track your coverage. There are both paid and free resources to track media coverage.

Free media tracking resources search for news articles based on your specific search term(s) and a date range. Some tracking services will send automatic e-mail alerts to notify you when your event and/or keywords are mentioned.

Paid media tracking typically captures a wider range of media stories (both print and online) than free Internet search tools. Paid media tracking sources search within certain locations, news outlet types, and/or specific dates. Some paid media tracking tools offer e-mail alerts and the ability to search archived Web and print news; they also allow users to tailor searches to obtain the most relevant media stories. Other paid media services monitor all forms of social media, including blogs, top video and image-sharing sites, forums, opinion sites, mainstream online media, and Twitter.

Be sure to share media coverage with your community partners, stakeholders, and all those who helped you plan and promote your event. Post a summary of media coverage on your organization's Web site. No matter the size or success of your event, remember that your efforts are key to educating the public about important health issues.

Last but not least, share your feedback and results with us here at healthfinder.gov. You can contact us at info@nhic.org or send us a tweet [@healthfinder](https://twitter.com/Healthfinder) (<http://twitter.com/Healthfinder>) .



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