

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://preventcancer.org/>) 

Colorectal cancer is the fourth most common cancer in the United States and the second leading cause of death from cancer. Colorectal cancer affects people in all racial and ethnic groups and is most often found in people age 50 and older.

The good news? If everyone age 50 and older were screened regularly, 6 out of 10 deaths from colorectal cancer could be prevented. Communities, health professionals, and families can work together to encourage people to get screened.

How can Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month make a difference?

We can use this month to raise awareness about colorectal cancer and take action toward prevention. Communities, organizations, families, and individuals can get involved and spread the word.

Here are just a few ideas:

- Encourage families to get active together – exercise may help reduce the risk of colorectal cancer.
- Talk to people in your community about the importance of getting screened for colorectal cancer starting at age 50.
- Ask doctors and nurses to talk to patients age 50 and older about the importance of getting screened.

How can I help spread the word?

We've made it easier for you to make a difference. This toolkit is full of ideas to help you take action today. For example:

- Add information about colorectal cancer to your newsletter.
- Tweet about Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month.
- Host a community event where families can be active while learning about local health resources.
- Add a Web badge to your website.
(<http://healthfinder.gov/NHO/nhoBadges.aspx#march>)

Get the Word Out

Sample Announcement for Newsletter, Listserv, or Media Release

(<http://healthfinder.gov/NHO/MarAnnounce.aspx>)

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

Colorectal cancer is the fourth most common cancer in the United States and the second leading cause of death from cancer. Colorectal cancer affects all racial and ethnic groups and is most often found in people ages 50 and older.

The best way to prevent colorectal cancer is to get screened regularly starting at age 50. There are often no signs or symptoms of colorectal cancer – that’s why it’s so important to get screened.

To increase awareness about the importance of colorectal cancer screening, **[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.]**

People over age 50 have the highest risk of colorectal cancer. You may also be at higher risk if you are African American, smoke, or have a family history of colorectal cancer.

Everyone can take these healthy steps to help prevent colorectal cancer:

- Get screened starting at age 50.
- Quit smoking and stay away from secondhand smoke.
- Get active and eat healthy.

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

Sample Tweets

- Starting at age 50, get tested regularly for colorectal cancer. Learn more: <http://1.usa.gov/11Y4avW>
 - Tweet this message: <http://ctt.ec/b7SUq> 
- Q. What are screenings? A. Screenings are medical tests that check for diseases. Learn more: <http://1.usa.gov/YF2MIq>
 - Tweet this message: <http://ctt.ec/f883W> 
- When it comes to colorectal cancer screening, you have options. Learn about different screening tests: <http://bit.ly/2cr2aJd>
 - Tweet this message: <http://ctt.ec/jPfuE> 
- Take steps to get active. Find your fitness level and see what you can do today: <http://1.usa.gov/UNrIvO>
 - Tweet this message: <http://ctt.ec/iPUfz> 
- Health Tip: Write down your reasons for quitting smoking. Find more action steps at <http://1.usa.gov/YJywLo>
 - Tweet this message: <http://ctt.ec/k7yR4> 
- Did you know that colorectal cancer screening is covered under the health care reform law? Learn more: <http://1.usa.gov/1bSOLjN>
 - Tweet this message: <http://ctt.ec/e34e1> 

E-cards

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) E-cards

- CDC: Colorectal Cancer
(<http://t.cdc.gov/ecards/message.aspx?cardid=117&category=230>)
- CDC: Colorectal Screening
(<http://t.cdc.gov/ecards/message.aspx?cardid=168&category=230>)

Web Badge

Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month – Are you 50 or older? Time to get screened.
(<http://healthfinder.gov/NHO/nhoBadges.aspx#march>)

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, 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. Partner with local African American community organizations to encourage people to get screened for colorectal cancer.

Adapted from the Prevent Cancer Foundation.

For more information and materials, contact the Prevent Cancer Foundation (<http://preventcancer.org/>)  at info@preventcancer.org.

Share These Resources

Health Topics

- Get Tested for Colorectal Cancer
(<http://healthfinder.gov/HealthTopics/Category/doctor-visits/screening-tests/get-tested-for-colorectal-cancer>)
- Colorectal Cancer Screening: Conversation starters
(<http://healthfinder.gov/HealthTopics/Category/health-conditions-and-diseases/cancer/colorectal-cancer-screening-conversation-starters>)
- Colorectal Cancer Screening: Questions for the doctor
(<http://healthfinder.gov/HealthTopics/Category/doctor-visits/talking-with-the-doctor/colorectal-cancer-screening-questions-for-the-doctor>)

Healthy People Topic Area

- Cancer
(<http://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topicsobjectives2020/overview.aspx?topicid=5>)

Personal Health Tools

- Colorectal Cancer Risk Assessment Tool
(<http://www.cancer.gov/colorectalcancerrisk/>)
- Track Your Physical Activity
(<https://www.supertracker.usda.gov/default.aspx>)
- Be Active Your Way Widget
(<http://healthfinder.gov/StayConnected/HealthWidgets.aspx#bayw>)
- Daily Food and Activity Diary
(http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/obesity/lose_wt/diaryint.htm)

Other Resources

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

Find More Information

- Colorectal Cancer
(<http://preventcancer.org/learn/preventable-cancers/colorectal/>) 
Prevent Cancer Foundation, Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month Sponsor
- Your Medicare Coverage: Colorectal cancer screenings
(<http://www.medicare.gov/coverage/colorectal-cancer-screenings.html>) Center for Medicare & Medicaid Services
- Basic Information About Colorectal Cancer
(http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/Colorectal/basic_info/)
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- Colorectal Cancer Screening Saves Lives [PDF – 2 MB]
(http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/colorectal/pdf/SFL_brochure.pdf)
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- Colorectal Cancer Control Program
(<http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/crccp/>)
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- Personal Stories About Screening for Colorectal Cancer
(http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/colorectal/basic_info/stories.htm)
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- Get Your Colorectal Cancer Screening Today [PDF – 1 MB] 
(<http://www.apiahf.org/sites/default/files/CD-Toolkit06-2009.pdf>)
Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum
- Cancer and African Americans
(<http://minorityhealth.hhs.gov/omh/browse.aspx?lvl=4&lvlid=16>)
Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Minority Health
- Tests to Detect Colorectal Cancer and Polyps: Fact Sheet
(<http://www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/factsheet/Detection/colorectal-screening>)
National Institutes of Health, National Cancer Institute
- What I Need to Know About Colon Polyps
(http://digestive.niddk.nih.gov/ddiseases/pubs/colonpolyps_ez/)
National Institutes of Health, National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases, National Digestive Diseases Information Clearinghouse

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 he or she is 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, libraries, post offices, 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 email 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 email 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

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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 (<http://twitter.com/healthfinder>). 



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