



Clinton County Health Department

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Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

"Working Together for a Healthier Community"

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Clinton County Health Department Press Release "Colon Cancer Awareness Month" March 3, 2010

March is Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month

In recognition of National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month, Lisa Marlow, Senior Public Health Educator of the Clinton County Health Department urges men and women over age 50 to get screened for colorectal cancer.

Colorectal cancer is the third most common cancer diagnosed in men and women in the United States, excluding skin cancers, and the third leading cause of cancer-related death in New York. Approximately, 11,000 new cases of colorectal cancer are diagnosed each year in New York, and 4,000 men and women die from the disease annually.

Colorectal cancer is the term used for cancers that start in the colon or the rectum. Colorectal cancer often starts as a small growth called a polyp, long before symptoms appear. A polyp is a non-cancerous growth of tissue or tumor that grows before cancer develops. "Colorectal cancer screening tests can either find cancer early or prevent cancer by finding polyps before they turn into cancer," Marlow said.

The cancer affects both men and women, but the risk increases with age. According to the American Cancer Society, more than 90 percent of colon cancer cases occur in people aged 50 and older. Some people are at greater risk for the disease than others, such as those with a personal or family history of colorectal cancer, history of intestinal polyps or inflammatory bowel disease, and people with a history of certain inherited diseases, such as familial adenomatous polyposis and hereditary nonpolyposis colon cancer.

Colorectal cancer can be prevented or detected early through regular screening. New Yorkers can lower their risk of developing colorectal cancer by:

- **Getting screened.** Begin regular screening at age 50. If you have a personal or family history of colorectal cancer or colorectal polyps, or a personal history of another cancer or inflammatory bowel disease, talk to your health care provider about getting screened before age 50.
- **Eating healthy.** Enjoy a low-fat diet that is rich in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains from breads, cereals, nuts, and beans.
- **Kicking the habit.** If you use tobacco, quit. If you don't use tobacco, don't start.
- **Skipping alcohol.** If you use alcohol, drink only in moderation. Alcohol and tobacco in combination are linked to colorectal cancer and other gastrointestinal cancers.
- **Getting moving.** Exercise for at least 20 minutes three to four days each week. Moderate exercise such as walking, gardening, or climbing may help reduce your risk for colorectal cancer.

"Talking with your health care provider about screening is vital to preventing colorectal cancer," Marlow said. "Colorectal cancer is easily treated and often curable when detected early. The tests are often covered by Medicare, Medicaid and many health insurers."

People who are uninsured or underinsured should contact the Cancer Services Program of Clinton County to find out how to get free colorectal cancer screening. Call 518-562-7112 to find the program near you. For more information about the Cancer Services Program, visit us at www.clintonhealth.org.

Endorsed by: _____
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