



NEWS BULLETIN

SUFFOLK COUNTY DEPARTMENT of CIVIL SERVICE OFFICE OF PUBLIC INFORMATION

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March 2012

For Your Information from...Suffolk County Cancer Awareness Task Force (CATF)



MARCH IS NATIONAL COLORECTAL CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

Do You Know... This year it is estimated that over 143,360 people will be diagnosed with colorectal cancer (cancer of the colon or rectum) and that 51,690 people will die of the disease?

Colorectal cancer starts in either the colon or the rectum. Cancer that starts in these different areas may cause different symptoms, but colon cancer and rectal cancer have many things in common. In most cases, colorectal cancers develop slowly over many years and most of these cancers start as a polyp – a growth of tissue that starts in the lining and grows into the center of the colon or rectum. This tissue may or may not be cancer. A type of polyp known as an adenoma can become cancer. Removing a polyp early may keep it from becoming cancer.

There are usually no symptoms with the early stages of colorectal cancer, which is why it is so important to have regular screenings. As the disease progresses symptoms may include;

- Having diarrhea or constipation
- Feeling that your bowel does not empty completely
- Finding blood (either bright red or very dark) in your stool
- Finding your stools are narrower than usual
- Frequently having gas pains or cramps, or feeling full or bloated
- Losing weight with no known reason
- Feeling very tired all the time
- Having nausea or vomiting

This disease can be prevented and with early detection it can be successfully treated.

Tips for prevention and reducing your risk of colorectal cancer:

- Talk to your health care provider about how you might lower your risk of cancer
- Get regular screenings so that polyps can be removed before they become cancerous
- Maintain a healthy weight. Obesity raises the risk of colorectal cancer
- Stay physically active and exercise regularly – at least 30 minutes, 5 times a week
- Do not smoke and if you do, QUIT
- If you drink alcohol, have no more than one a day if you are a woman and two a day if you are a man.
- Eat fruits, vegetables and whole grains to help get and stay healthy.
- Eat less red meat and cut out processed meats.

For those at average risk of colorectal cancer, it is usually recommended that screening begin at age 50 with a colonoscopy. Consult your physician if you have other risk factors such as a family history, tobacco use, you are obese or do not exercise regularly.

Information from the Prevent Cancer Foundation <http://www.preventcancer.org/> and the Centers for Disease and Control and Prevention <http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/>

The New York State Department of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention fund a Cancer Services Program Partnership in Suffolk County which provides services for colorectal, breast and cervical cancer screening in uninsured or underinsured individuals. Please contact (631)969-8353 if you live in Western Suffolk County or (631) 548-6320 if you live in Eastern Suffolk County. You may also call 1-866-442-2262 to find a Cancer Services Program near you.