



NORTH DAKOTA
COLORECTAL CANCER
ROUNDTABLE



NORTH DAKOTA
DEPARTMENT of HEALTH



NEWS RELEASE

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March is Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month – Know Your Options, Get Screened

BISMARCK, N.D. – March is Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month, and the North Dakota Colorectal Cancer Roundtable, co-led by the North Dakota Department of Health and American Cancer Society, encourages all North Dakota residents age 50 and older be screened for colorectal cancer.

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Visit the health department home page at www.ndhealth.gov.

Colorectal cancer is the nation's second leading cause of cancer related deaths. However, it is one of only a few cancers that can be prevented. Through proper colorectal cancer screening, doctors can find and remove polyps, hidden growths, in the colon before they become cancerous. Removing polyps can prevent cancer altogether.

“Colorectal cancer is a major public health problem, and adults age 50 and older should be screened regularly. We have found that many people aren't getting tested because they don't believe they are at risk; they don't understand there are testing options; or they don't think they can afford it,” said Dr. Fadel Nammour, MD, Gastroenterologist and Chair of the N.D. Colorectal Cancer Roundtable. “The truth is, the vast majority of cases of colorectal cancer occur in people age 50 and older. Colorectal cancer in its early stages usually has no symptoms, so everyone 50 and older should get tested. There are several screening options – even take home options – available. Plus, many public and private insurance plans cover colorectal cancer screening, and there may be local resources available to help those who are uninsured.”

While colorectal cancer incidence rates have dropped 30 percent in the U.S. over the last 10 years among adults 50 and older, it is still the second leading cause of cancer death in the U.S., despite being highly preventable, detectable and treatable. In fact, in 2015 in the U.S., 132,700 cases of colorectal cancer were diagnosed.

It is estimated that 380 people in North Dakota will be diagnosed with colorectal cancer in 2017, and 140 will die from the disease.

“These statistics could look much better if more people were screened for colorectal cancer,” stated Joyce Sayler, Community Partnership Coordinator, Division of Cancer Prevention and Control at the North Dakota Department of Health. Approximately 4 in 10 North Dakota residents are not up to date with colorectal cancer screening, and the state has historically fallen in the lowest quartile for screening rates nationwide.

Nationally, the American Cancer Society and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention are leading an effort to raise the nation's colorectal cancer screening rates to 80 percent by the year 2018. More than 1,000 partners have signed onto the goal nationwide, including many healthcare organizations across North Dakota.

“We are asking all members of our community to come together, and help us by getting screened and talking to your friends and family who are over 50 years of age about getting screened,” said Sara Anderson, Health Systems Manager, American Cancer Society North Dakota. “Together, we can help to eliminate colorectal cancer as a major public health problem.”

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For more information or to learn about resources in your area, visit:
www.cancer.org/colon and www.ndcancercoalition.org

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