

MARCH 2024

# COLORECTAL CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

## Weekly Topic Briefer

### PREVENTION STRATEGIES

Cancer prevention means lowering your risk of developing cancer. While there is no guaranteed way to prevent cancer, there are steps you can take to reduce your risk. Behavior changes do not address the socioeconomic and environmental factors that contribute to a person's cancer risk. However, starting and keeping up with healthier behaviors can lower the risk of getting certain cancers. Avoiding cancer risk factors may help prevent certain cancers. Risk factors include:

- Smoking,
- Being overweight, and not getting enough exercise.

Talk to your doctor or other health care professional about how you might lower your risk of cancer.



#### Lifestyle changes can decrease your CRC risk:

- Diets high in fruits and vegetables
- Eat a diet high in fiber
- Regular physical activity
- No smoking/tobacco use

#### Other Preventive Measures:

- Know your family's cancer history
- Be aware of your body and any symptoms
- Stay up to date on your colon cancer screening

## PREP IS NOT WHAT IT USED TO BE

There are several different types of colonoscopy prep available today. It's important to review any questions or concerns you may have with your doctor about preparing for a colonoscopy.

- Polymer-based formulas (PEG)
  - The most commonly prescribed bowel prep formulas use a polymer-based laxative known as polyethylene glycol 3350 (PEG). PEG formulas are typically in powder form designed to be mixed with large volumes of water.
- Saline-based formulas (NaP)
  - Saline-based laxatives include sodium phosphate (NaP) as a primary osmotic agent, and often other mineral salts such as potassium and magnesium.

## MYTHS ABOUT CRC SCREENING

**MYTH:** Screening is too expensive.

**FACT:** Most screening tests are covered by insurance, including Medicare. There are also low-cost screening options.

**MYTH:** Nobody in my family has a history of colorectal cancer, so I am not at risk.

**FACT:** Most colorectal cancers are found in people without a family history of colorectal cancer. Those with a family history are at higher risk.

**MYTH:** If my stool looks normal, I should be fine.

**FACT:** You can have colorectal cancer or polyps even if your stool looks normal.

**MYTH:** Colorectal cancer is not that common.

**FACT:** Colorectal cancer is the second-leading cause of cancer related deaths in the U.S. Screening is the best way to prevent death from colorectal cancer.

**MYTH:** Having a colonoscopy is the only way to get screened.

**FACT:** There are several different screening tests available. Some are simple and can be done at home.

Image sourced from American Cancer Society Fact Sheet

### Click on the Links Below to Learn More

- [Family Cancer Syndromes](#)
- [Cancer Family History Infographic](#)
- [Recent Progress in Lynch Syndrome and Other Familial Colorectal Cancer Syndromes](#)
- [The Search for Unaffected Individuals with Lynch Syndrome: Do the Ends Justify the Means?](#)