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February 2015 Newsletter

March is National Colorectal Cancer Month

Colorectal cancer is one of the most common cancers in the United States. However, with regular screening it is detectable and even preventable. Employers can play an important role in the prevention of colorectal cancer (CRC) by providing opportunities to learn more about CRC and by promoting regular screenings.

Ways Employers Can Help:

- Educating employees about national guidelines and the need to be screened
- Hosting onsite events to promote screening, and offering incentives to employees to participate in screening programs
- Provide sick leave or flextime for employees who need screening or follow-up visits
- Provide coverage for preventative services, including colorectal cancer screening tests
- Reduce out-of-pocket costs for colorectal cancer screening
- Require health plans to send reminders to both employee members and providers about colorectal cancer screening, or add reminders about CRC screening to regular messages to employees (e.g. on paycheck stubs or birthday cards)



Maine CDC Urges Screening for Colorectal Cancer

Colorectal cancer is the 3rd most common cancer in the United States, claiming the lives of over 50,000 Americans per year. The risk of colorectal cancer increases as you get older, but other factors such as being overweight or obese and poor nutrition can also increase your risk.

In the early stage, colorectal cancer usually does not have symptoms which is why screening is so important. Screening can detect and allow for the removal of colorectal polyps that might have become cancerous, as well as detect cancer at an early stage, when treatment may be less extensive and more successful.

Who should be screened?

Beginning at age 50, men and women should be screened through one of the following tests:

- Colonoscopy every 10 years, involves the insertion of a thin flexible tube into the rectum to look for polyps or cancer
- Fecal immunochemical tests (FIT), or fecal occult blood test (FOBT), are testing options that allow you to collect stool specimens at home and have them tested by a medical care provider. This test should be done on an annual basis and is not recommended for those with a family history of colorectal cancer
- Sigmoidoscopy every 5 years with high-sensitivity fecal occult blood testing every 3 years
- Individuals should talk to their doctor to determine which screening option would be best for them

Employer Success Story

Rubb, Inc., located in Sanford, has taken many steps to promote and encourage healthy behaviors such as:

- No soda beverages at company meetings and functions
- 5 minute stretch break for meetings lasting longer than one hour
- Removed office snack vending machine and offer healthy snacks honor system (all under 200 calories) at an affordable cost of 35 cents
- Smoke-free campus & tobacco cessation program
- Company pays 25% of cost of employee gym membership
- Free annual flu shots
- Wellness Points Program – employees earn points for participating in wellness activities which can be redeemed for cash

Beginning in February, Rubb Inc. will begin EatRight Rewards Program, which promotes healthy foods and cost savings. This is available to employees enrolled in the Group Health Insurance, through Harvard Pilgrim. In addition to e-coupons, and healthy recipe ideas, Rubb, Inc. will offer an incentive plan consisting of 20% cash back on produce with a monthly maximum payout of \$10.

Rubb, Inc. has made many great changes and are constantly looking for new strategies to get employee buy-in and participation in their wellness activities. Keep up the good work!

February Health Observances

- ◆ [American Heart Month](#)
- ◆ [National Wear Red Day](#) (6)

March Health Observances

- ◆ [National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month](#)
- ◆ [National Nutrition Month](#)



Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention
An Office of the Department of Health and Human Services

Paul R. LePage, Governor

Mary C. Mayhew, Commissioner

Physical Activity: Nature’s “Miracle Cure”

“If a medication existed which had a similar effect to physical activity, it would be regarded as a wonder drug or a miracle cure.” Sir Liam Donaldson

It is a great time to plan a new physical activity program. The benefits of physical activity are numerous, and include:

- Weight Control (in conjunction with proper nutrition)
- Reduced risk of heart disease, diabetes, and some cancers
- Stronger bones and muscles to help prevent injuries
- Decreased stress
- Improved memory and ability to learn new task
- Improved mental health and mood
- Improved ability to perform daily activities and prevent falls
- Increased longevity

Physical Activity truly is a “miracle cure” that will have significant benefits for employees and the potential of substantial financial benefits for employers. According to the [2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans](#), adults can obtain all of the benefits of this “miracle cure” by participating in at least 150 minutes of moderate [intensity](#) activity per week. Participating in more vigorous activities can decrease the amount of time required per week, without decreasing benefits.

There are many resources available to employers interested in implementing worksite programs that increase employee physical activity. One easy way to get your employees in the habit of regular physical activity is to enroll your workplace in [Move and Improve](#), a program of Eastern Maine Healthcare Systems. Move and Improve is a **FREE** 12 week program that begins March 1st. It is designed to encourage participants to increase their daily and weekly physical activity.

Here are some other ideas to share with employees on how they can be physically active this winter:

- Shovel snow after a storm
- Sledding or making a snowman with friends or family can burn lots of calories
- Participate in winter sports like cross-country skiing and snowshoeing
- Join a gym
- Walk around the office
- Take the stairs instead of the elevator if they are able to

There are many quality physical activity resources for employers including the following:

- [Steps to Wellness: A Guide to Implementing the 2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans in the Workplace](#)
- [US CDC Worksite Health Promotion: Physical Activity](#)
- [American Cancer Society: Active for Life](#)
- [Let’s Go! Healthy Workplaces Toolkit](#)

Do you want to highlight your worksite in a future newsletter or have questions that you want Maine CDC staff to answer? Please send your worksite success story or questions to Meredith Backus at meredith.backus@maine.gov

The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) does not discriminate on the basis of disability, race, color, creed, gender, sexual orientation, age, or national origin, in admission to, access to, or operations of its programs, services, or activities, or its hiring or employment practices. This notice is provided as required by Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and in accordance with the Civil Rights Act of 1964 as amended, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and the Maine Human Rights Act and Executive Order Regarding State of Maine Contracts for Services. Questions, concerns, complaints or requests for additional information regarding the ADA may be forwarded to DHHS’ ADA Compliance/EEO Coordinators, 11 State House Station – 221 State Street, Augusta, Maine 04333, 207-287-4289 (V), 207-287-3488 (V), TTY users call Maine relay 711. Individuals who need auxiliary aids for effective communication in program and services of DHHS are invited to make their needs and preferences known to the ADA Compliance/EEO Coordinators. This notice is available in alternate formats, upon request.

Ask Us

Question: Why do people need to get screened for colorectal cancer (CRC)?

Answer: CRC is the second leading cancer killer in the United States because people do not get screened when they should. If everyone aged 50 years and older had regular screening tests, at least 60% of the deaths from this cancer could be avoided.

Screening saves lives. Precancerous polyps and early-stage of CRC don’t always cause symptoms. This means someone could have cancer and not know it. Screening can find polyps and remove them before they have a chance to turn into cancer. Screening tests can also find colorectal cancer early. When found early, the chances of being cured are good.

If you are 50 or older, talk with your doctor about getting screened.

Additional Resources

screenmaine.org



Department of Health
and Human Services

Maine People Living
Safe, Healthy and Productive Lives

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