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Cornerstone of Health

Dr. Sheila Pinette, Director of Maine CDC



March is Colorectal Awareness Month and National Nutrition Month. It's a happy coincidence that these fall in the same month.

Dr. Sheila Pinette Eating smart, moving more and maintaining a healthy weight are the keys to good health and they help lower the risk of colorectal cancer! Regular physical activity, eating a diet high in fiber, more fruits and veggies, less red meat and drinking less alcohol lower the risk of colorectal cancer.

Studies are also finding that obesity raises the risk of colorectal cancer. Among men, a higher Body Mass Index (BMI) is strongly associated with a higher risk of developing colorectal cancer; it is strongly linked to abdominal fat or a large waist circumference. The relationship between BMI and waist circumference is there for women too but it is not as strong.

March is a great time to take stock of what and how much you eat and move. Use the warmer weather, longer days and early local produce to eat smarter and move more this month:

- Hold walking meetings- collect your staff and walk around the block while doing updates
- Create a policy that allows employees flex time to exercise during the work day
- Offer more fruits and veggies and high fiber foods in meetings and vending machines
- Try adding at least 1 more veggie to your meals and snacks for a week, and then another
- Host an employee weight loss or fitness challenge that provides fun prizes to help with staying engaged.

March is National Colorectal Cancer Month

Employers can play an important role in the prevention of colorectal cancer (CRC) by promoting regular screening, help aid the screening process and address risk factors (obesity, poor nutrition, tobacco and alcohol consumption).

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. In 2013 it was estimated that 730 Mainers would be diagnosed with colon cancer and there would be 250 deaths from colon cancer (*American Cancer Society, Facts and Figures 2013*).

It is one of the most preventable and treatable types of cancer if caught early by following recommended screening guidelines. States that had the highest rates of screening saw the lowest rates of death from colorectal cancer. (*American Cancer Society*) (*CDC, 2013*). Screening can detect and allow for the removal of colorectal polyps that may 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. Individuals should talk to their doctor to determine which screening option would be best for them.:

- 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 FOBT every 3 years.



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

Poison Prevention in the Workplace

Every day we use medications, chemicals, and other products at home and work. Many of these products can be poisons. Poisoning is a leading public health problem. It does not just happen to children. It can happen to anyone, at any time and in any place, including at work. Poisoning is much more common than people think.

A poison is anything that can harm you if it is used:

- In the wrong way
- By the wrong person
- In the wrong amount

Other poisons harm you when you do not expect it. Most poisonings happen when poisons:

- Are swallowed
- Come in contact with the skin
- Are splashed in the eyes
- Are breathed in or inhaled

If your work involves chemicals or cleaning products, remember they:

- Can make deadly combinations when used together
- Should be kept in their original containers, clearly labeled

Poison prevention in the workplace includes:

- Proper use of a product or medication
- Reading all directions and warnings on the label BEFORE using a product
- Proper storage – especially items like fertilizers and pesticides
- Wearing protective clothing if necessary
- Washing hands after contact with chemicals like pesticides and fertilizers
- Recognizing look-a-like products
- Providing proper supervision

The Northern New England Poison Center is a critical resource for advice and help.

When incidents happen with chemicals or medicine, call **1-800-222-1222 at once**. You will get help right away from a nurse, doctor, pharmacist, or other poison expert. If someone is having trouble breathing, **call 911 at once**.

For more information on poison prevention go to:

Northern New England Poison Center: <http://www.nnepc.org/>

National Safety Council: www.nsc.org/safety_home/Resources/PoisonPreventionKit/Pages/WorkplacePoisonPrevention101.aspx



March Health Observances

- ◆ [National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month](#)
- ◆ [National Endometriosis Awareness Month](#)
- ◆ [National Kidney Month](#)
- ◆ [National Nutrition Month](#)
- ◆ [Workplace Eye Wellness Month](#)
- ◆ [National Sleep Awareness Week](#) (3-10)
- ◆ [Brain Awareness Week](#) (11-17)
- ◆ [World Kidney Day](#) (March 14)
- ◆ [National Poison Prevention Week](#) (17-23)
- ◆ [World Tuberculosis Day](#) (March 24)
- ◆ [American Diabetes Alert Day](#) (March 26)

April Health Observances

- ◆ [Alcohol Awareness Month](#)
- ◆ [National Distracted Driving Awareness Month](#)
- ◆ [National Donate Life](#)
- ◆ [Occupational Therapy Month](#)
- ◆ [Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month](#)
- ◆ [STI Awareness Month](#)
- ◆ [Women's Eye Health and Safety Month](#)
- ◆ [World Health Day](#) (April 7)
- ◆ [Air Quality Awareness Week](#) (April 28-May 2)

Additional Resources

screenmaine.org



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Department of Health and Human Services
 Maine People Living Safe, Healthy and Productive Lives
 Paul R. LePage, Governor Mary C. Mayhew, Commissioner