

March is Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month

To increase awareness about the importance of colorectal cancer screening, the **Louisiana State Board of Nursing** is proudly participating in Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month.

DID YOU KNOW?

Colorectal cancer is the fourth most common cancer in the United States and the **second leading cause of death from cancer**. Colorectal cancer affects all racial and ethnic groups and is most often found in people ages 50 and older. The good news is that if everyone age 50 and older were screened regularly, **6 out of 10 deaths from colorectal cancer could be prevented**.



The best way to prevent colorectal cancer is to **get screened** regularly starting at age 50. There are often no signs or symptoms of colorectal cancer – that’s why it’s so important to get screened.

RISK FACTORS

- People age **50 and older**
- People who **smoke**
- People who are **overweight** or obese, especially those who carry fat around their waists
- People who **aren’t physically active**
- People who drink **alcohol** in excess, especially men
- People who eat a lot of **red meat** (such as beef, pork or lamb) or processed meat (such as bacon, sausage, hot dogs or cold cuts)
- People with personal or **family histories** of colorectal cancer or benign (not cancerous) colorectal polyps
- People with personal histories of **inflammatory bowel disease** (such as ulcerative colitis or Crohn’s disease)

COLORECTAL CANCER SYMPTOMS

Early stages of colorectal cancer don’t usually have symptoms. Later on, people may have these symptoms:

- **Bleeding** from the rectum or blood in or on the stool
- Change in bowel **habits**
- Stools that are more narrow than usual
- General problems in the **abdomen**, such as bloating, fullness or cramps
- Diarrhea, constipation or a feeling in the rectum that the bowel movement isn’t quite complete
- **Weight loss** for no apparent reason
- Being **tired** all the time
- **Vomiting**



PREVENTION

Everyone can take these healthy steps to help prevent colorectal cancer:

- Be physically **active** for at least 30 minutes, at least five days a week.
- Maintain a healthy **weight**.
- Don't **smoke**. If you do smoke, **quit**.
- If you drink **alcohol**, have no more than one drink a day if you're a woman or two drinks a day if you're a man.
- Eat **fruits, vegetables and whole grains** to help you get and stay healthy.
- Eat **less red meat** and cut out processed meat.
- **Report symptoms** to your doctor immediately. **Get screened** starting at age 50.

PERSONAL HEALTH TOOLS

- Colorectal Cancer Risk Assessment Tool (<http://www.cancer.gov/colorectalcancerrisk/>)
- Track Your Physical Activity (<https://www.supertracker.usda.gov/default.aspx>)
- Be Active Your Way Widget
(<http://healthfinder.gov/StayConnected/HealthWidgets.aspx#bayw>)
- Daily Food and Activity Diary
(http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/obesity/lose_wt/diaryint.htm)
- Fiber Calculator (<http://www.healthcalculators.org/calculators/fiber.asp>)
- Interactive Facts About Smoking
Tutorial(<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/tutorials/smokingthefacts/htm/index.htm>)

Information Adapted from:

Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (2015). *March 2015 Toolkit – Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month*. Retrieved from <http://www.healthfinder.gov/NHO/PDFs/MarchNHOToolkit.pdf>

Prevent Cancer Foundation (n.d.). *Colorectal Cancer*. Retrieved from <http://preventcancer.org/prevention/preventable-cancers/colorectal-cancer/>