

Paper Clip – Colorectal Cancer Screening

Description: Colorectal cancer is a cancer that develops in the tissue of the colon and/or rectum. The colon absorbs water and salt from the remaining food matter after it goes through the small intestines. The rectum is responsible for storing and passing waste from the body. This is the 3rd most commonly diagnosed cancer and the third leading cause of death from cancer in the United States. Colon cancer screening is used to look for possible colon cancer when a person does not have any symptoms. Screening tests can find precancerous polyps, so they can be removed before they turn into cancer. Screening tests can also find colorectal cancer early, when treatment works best.

Possible Cause: No one knows the exact causes of the cancer. Some risk factors are:

- Age – Being 45 years of age or older
- Personal history of polyps (a growth) on the inner wall of the colon or rectum
- Family history of colorectal cancer
- Lifestyle factors such as: diets high in fat and red or processed meat, cigarette smoking, obesity, physical inactivity, and excessive alcohol use
- Race and Ethnicity - African Americans are at an increased risk of colorectal cancer

Diagnostic Tests: Colon cancer, when discovered early, is treatable. Testing should be done between the ages of 45 to 75 years of age. Adults age 76-85 should ask their provider if they recommend screening. If you have a family history of colon cancer or are an African-American, you need to discuss with your provider if earlier testing is right for you. Possible screening tests are: FOBT (fecal occult blood tests), FIT-DNA test, Flexible Sigmoidoscopy, CT Colonography, or a Colonoscopy. Your provider can help you determine what kind of screening is right for you.

Conversation with Member:

1. Case Manager/Care Coordinator

- **General opening:** “According to the information I have, it looks like you are due for colon cancer screening. Can we spend a few minutes discussing this?”
- **Offer Information:** “This is the 3rd most common cancer in the United States and affects all races and both men and women. Routine testing starting at the age of 45 may identify potential cancer forming polyps and allow for early treatment.”
- **Get more specific:** It is recommended that you get screened. There are a variety of tests for colon cancer screening:
 - FIT-DNA test does not require any preparation and can be done in the privacy of your home
 - Colonoscopy or Flexible sigmoidoscopy- are more invasive and cannot be done at home
 - Some tests that your provider recommends may require a dietary and bowel prep.You should talk with your provider about which type of test is best for you.

- **Lifestyle impacts & Medical Treatment options:** We discussed some tests, but there are also some lifestyle factors that can affect your risk of colorectal cancer. These include:
 - Good dietary habits
 - Weight control
 - Physical activity
 - If you are a cigarette smoker or consume alcohol excessively, you may want to consider some changes
- **Review the member's plan of action:** "Based on this information, can we make a plan for you to work with your provider to get a screening completed?"

2. Customer Service

- **General opening:** "According to the information I have, it looks like you are due for colon cancer screening. We encourage you to contact your health care provider to discuss getting this screening done. Would you like to know a little bit more about this?"
- **Offer Information:** "Not sure if you knew this, but colon cancer is the 3rd most common cancer in the United States and affects all races and both men and women. Treatment is far more successful if detected early. Routine testing starting at the age of 50 (or 45 if you are at an increased risk) may identify potential cancer forming polyps and allow for early treatment."
- **Get more specific:** "It is recommended that you get screened. There are a variety of tests, some that do not require any preparation and can be done in the privacy of your home, such as the "FIT-DNA" test, or others tests that your provider recommends may require a dietary and bowel prep. Some of these screening tests are more invasive than others, such as a colonoscopy. You should talk with your provider about which type of test is best for you."
- **Lifestyle impacts & Medical Treatment options:** We discussed some tests, but there are also some lifestyle factors that can affect your risk of colorectal cancer. These include:
 - Good dietary habits
 - Weight control
 - Physical activity
 - If you are a cigarette smoker or consume alcohol excessively, you may want to consider some changes
- **Review the member's plan of action:** "We recommend you contact your health care provider starting at age 45 to discuss when it's appropriate for you to start colon cancer screening."

References:

- American Cancer Society: <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/colon-rectal-cancer.html> or phone 1 800-227-2345 Accessed 2/23/2023
- PDQ® Screening and Prevention Editorial Board. PDQ Colorectal Cancer Prevention. Bethesda, MD: National Cancer Institute. Updated 3/9/2018. Available at: <https://www.cancer.gov/types/colorectal/patient/colorectal-prevention-pdq>. Accessed 2/23/2023. [PMID: 26389376]
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: https://www.cdc.gov/cancer/colorectal/basic_info/screening/ Accessed 2/23/2023