

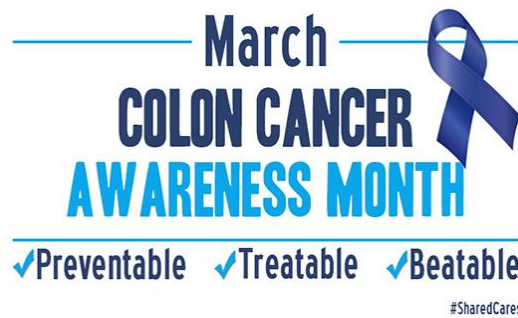


**Kentucky Public Health**

Prevent. Promote. Protect.

## Screening for Colon Cancer Works

*52 Weeks of Public Health Spotlight: National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month*



Released March 2, 2018



**FRANKFORT, Ky.** (March 2, 2018) – The Department for Public Health within the Cabinet for Health and Family Services is reminding Kentuckians that colon cancer screening works as a part of National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month.

March 2<sup>nd</sup> has been designated as Wear Blue Day to celebrate the increase of colon cancer screening rates in Kentucky due to the efforts of health professionals and Kentuckians interested in improving their health. More than 70% of Kentuckians aged 50-75 years of age reported meeting the recommendation for colorectal cancer screening, according to 2016 data from the Kentucky Behavioral Risk Factor Survey, collected by the Department for Public Health (DPH) through funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

With improved screening rates over the past 15 years, Kentucky has seen a reduction in the number of new cases of colon cancer and death from colon cancer according to the Kentucky Cancer Registry (KCR). Yet, many Kentuckians still delay being screened until they have symptoms. In Kentucky, as many as 21% of colorectal cancer cases are diagnosed at a later stage when the disease is more difficult to treat.

“Screening is particularly important for the prevention of colon cancer because we can remove polyps before they become cancer. This cancer can have no initial symptoms so colon cancer

screening allows us to diagnose it early when the cancer is easier to treat,” said Dr. Jeffrey Howard, Acting Commissioner of the Department for Public Health. “Sadly, colon cancer is second only to lung cancer as a cause of cancer-related death in the United States and Kentucky.”

Anyone between the ages of 50 and 75 years should talk to their health care provider about colon cancer screening. People with a family history of the disease or inflammatory bowel disease and people with family history of colon cancer among family member less than 50 years of age may need to start screening earlier. In Kentucky, the rates of colon cancer are higher among residents of the state’s Appalachian region and the African American population.

In addition to colonoscopy, health care providers can now recommend several colon cancer-screening options including some take home tests, covered by most insurance plans.

“Colorectal cancer can strike anyone. The best way to make sure you don’t have it is to get screened,” said Brian Boisseau, Health Program Administrator.

What can you do to reduce your risk of colon cancer?

- Talk to your health care provider about screening
- Be physically active
- Maintain a healthy weight and eat a healthy diet
- Limit alcohol consumption
- Avoid tobacco and smokeless products
- Know your family history

For more information on colon cancer screening, visit the [Kentucky Colon Cancer Screening Program website](#).

Interested in learning more about healthy Kentucky lifestyle? Through our 52 Weeks of Public Health campaign, the Kentucky Department for Public Health will spotlight public health issues as well as highlight services and resources available to Kentuckians statewide. Follow us on [Facebook](#) for your weekly tip.