

## March is Colorectal Cancer Screening Month

### What is Colorectal Cancer?

Colorectal cancer is a disease in which cells in the colon or rectum grow out of control. Sometimes it is called colon cancer, for short. The colon is the large intestine or large bowel. The rectum is the passageway that connects the colon to the anus.

Sometimes abnormal growths, called polyps, form in the colon or rectum. Over time, some polyps may turn into cancer. Screening tests can find polyps so they can be removed before turning into cancer. Screening also helps find colorectal cancer at an early stage, when treatment works best.

### What are the risk factors?

Your risk of getting colorectal cancer increases as you get older. Other risk factors include having—

- Inflammatory bowel disease such as Crohn's disease or ulcerative colitis.
- A personal or family history of colorectal cancer or colorectal polyps.
- A genetic syndrome such as familial adenomatous polyposis (FAP) or hereditary non-polyposis colorectal cancer (Lynch syndrome).

Lifestyle factors that may contribute to an increased risk of colorectal cancer include—

- Lack of regular physical activity.
- A diet low in fruit and vegetables.
- A low-fiber and high-fat diet, or a diet high in processed meats.
- Overweight and obesity.

- Alcohol consumption.
- Tobacco use.

### What Can I do to reduce my risk?

Overall, the most effective way to reduce your risk of colorectal cancer is to get

screened for colorectal cancer routinely, beginning at age 45.

Almost all colorectal cancers begin as precancerous polyps (abnormal growths) in the colon or rectum. Such polyps can be present in the colon for years before invasive cancer develops. They may not cause any symptoms, especially early on. Colorectal cancer screening can find precancerous polyps so they can be removed before they turn into cancer. In this way, colorectal cancer is prevented. Screening can also find colorectal cancer early, when treatment works best.

### Diet

Research is underway to find out if changes to your diet can reduce your colorectal cancer risk. Medical experts often recommend a diet low in animal fats and high in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains to reduce the risk of other chronic diseases, such as coronary artery disease and diabetes. This diet also may reduce the risk of colorectal cancer.

### Healthy Choices

Some studies suggest that people may reduce their risk of developing colorectal cancer by increasing physical activity, keeping a healthy weight, limiting alcohol consumption, and avoiding tobacco.

### What are the Symptoms?

Colorectal polyps (abnormal growths in the colon or rectum that can turn into cancer if not removed) and colorectal cancer don't always cause symptoms, especially at first. Someone could have polyps or colorectal cancer and not know it. That is why getting screened regularly for colorectal cancer is so important.

If you have symptoms, they may include—

- A change in bowel habits.
- Blood in or on your stool (bowel movement).
- Diarrhea, constipation, or feeling that the bowel does not empty all the way.

- Abdominal pain, aches, or cramps that don't go away.

- Weight loss and you don't know why.

If you have any of these symptoms, talk to your doctor. They may be caused by something other than cancer. The only way to know what is causing them is to see your doctor.

### What should I know about screening?

#### Screening Recommendations

Regular screening, beginning at age 45, is the key to preventing colorectal cancer and finding it early. The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (Task Force) recommends that adults age 45 to 75 be screened for colorectal cancer. The Task Force recommends that adults age 76 to 85 talk to their doctor about screening.

The Task Force recommends several colorectal cancer screening strategies, including stool tests, flexible sigmoidoscopy, colonoscopy, and CT colonography (virtual colonoscopy). Learn about these screening tests.

#### When Should I Begin to Get Screened?

Most people should begin screening for colorectal cancer soon after turning 45, then continue getting screened at regular intervals. However, you may need to be tested earlier than 45, or more often than other people, if you have—

Inflammatory bowel disease such as Crohn's disease or ulcerative colitis.

A personal or family history of colorectal cancer or colorectal polyps.

A genetic syndrome such as familial adenomatous polyposis (FAP) or hereditary non-polyposis colorectal cancer (Lynch syndrome).

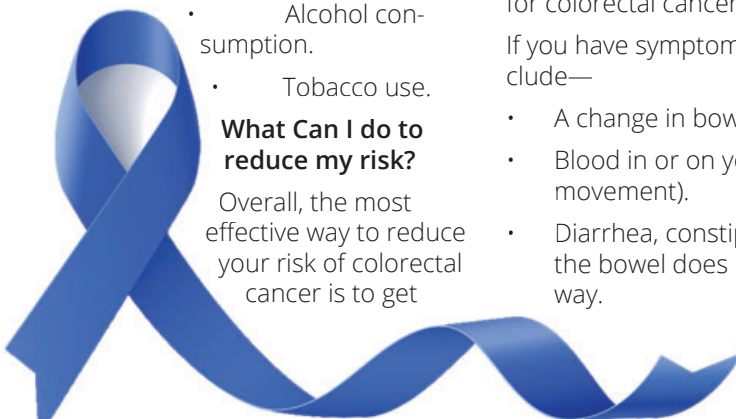
If you think you are at increased risk for colorectal cancer, speak with your doctor about—

When to begin screening.

Which test is right for you.

How often to get tested.

### TALK TO YOUR PROVIDER ABOUT WHICH COLORECTAL CANCER SCREENING TEST IS RIGHT FOR YOU





For more information on diabetes, or to make an appointment, call your Weeks primary care provider at 603-788-5095.

The Diabetes Support Group monthly newsletter is produced by Weeks Medical Center Registered Nurse and Diabetes Care and Education Specialist, Ashley Clauss. If you have any questions regarding the Diabetes Support Group, contact Ashley at 603-788-5659. Not only is this support group for patients with diabetes, but also their family, caregiver, and support person. All are welcome. We are always looking for new members!



## Next Meeting... Please Join Us

Our next meeting will be on Tuesday, March 26, 2024, from 7:00pm - 8:00pm. This meeting will be located in the Hospital Board Room.

## RECIPE OF THE MONTH

### Mint Chocolate Chip Cookies

These decadent Mint Chocolate Chip Cookies are bursting with fresh, cool mint flavor and rich, melty chocolate chips. Best of all, there is 0 grams of added sugar in this amazing recipe! Enjoy the best tasting Stevia for sweetening beverages and baking. Cook, bake, and sprinkle Splenda® Stevia anywhere you would use sugar!

#### INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/2 tsp baking soda
- 1/2 tsp baking powder
- 1 cup vegetable oil spread
- 1/2 cup Splenda® Stevia Sweetener
- 1 egg
- 1/2 cup Plain Nonfat Greek yogurt (room temperature)
- 1 oz sugar-free instant vanilla pudding mix
- 1 tsp peppermint extract
- 1 tsp green food coloring
- 1 cup stevia-sweetened or sugar-free chocolate chips

#### DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 375°F and prepare two large baking sheets with parchment paper.
2. In a small bowl, mix together flour, baking soda, and baking powder and set aside.
3. In a large bowl with an electric mixture, beat vegetable oil spread until light and fluffy. Slowly add Splenda Stevia Sweetener and beat until fluffy. Add egg and beat until incorporated and then add Greek yogurt, pudding mix, mint extract and green food coloring and mix well.
4. Scrape down the sides of the bowl as needed with a spatula. On slow speed, add the flour mixture into the pudding mixture and mix until well combined, but do not over-mix. Fold in the chocolate chips.
5. Using a 2-tablespoon cookie scoop, drop spoonfuls onto prepared baking sheet, 2 inches apart. Press down slightly as the cookies do not spread very much while baking (should be about 1/2" thick).
6. Bake for 10 minutes or until just slightly browned on the edges. Cool on rack for 1 minute and then move to a wire cooling rack. Enjoy!



#### NUTRITION FACTS

Servings Per Recipe: 39, Serving Size: 1 cookie, Calories 70, Total Fat 4.5g, Satfat 2g, Cholesterol 5mg, Sodium 110mg, Total Carbohydrated 10g, Dietary Fiber 2g, Total Sugars 0g, Protein 1g,

[https://www.diabetesfoodhub.org/recipes/mint-chocolate-chip-cookies.html?home-category\\_id=1](https://www.diabetesfoodhub.org/recipes/mint-chocolate-chip-cookies.html?home-category_id=1)