



North Central District Health Department

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: MARCH 24, 2016

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March is National Colorectal Cancer Month *NCDHD Encourages Residents to Learn the Facts*

March is National Colorectal Cancer month, and the North Central District Health Department (NCDHD) encourages residents to learn the facts about this deadly disease. Cancer is a disease in which cells in the body grow out of control. When cancer starts in the colon or rectum, it is called Colorectal, or colon, cancer. Colorectal cancer is the third most common cancer in both men and women.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 60% of deaths from this cancer can be avoided if people aged 50 years or older had regular screening tests. Screenings can find precancerous polyps, abnormal growths in the colon or rectum, so that they can be removed before turning into cancer. About nine out of every 10 people whose colorectal cancers are found early and treated appropriately are still alive five years later.

“NCDHD encourages residents 50 year of age or older to schedule an appointment with their primary care provider to be screened for colorectal cancer,” said Patrice Sulik, NCDHD Director of Health. “Screening helps find colorectal cancer at an early stage, when treatment often leads to a cure.”

NCDHD Board Member, Rich Zulick from Stafford, states “Screenings will help lower the number of deaths caused by cancer as well as choosing healthy lifestyles, such as eating a well-balanced diet and increasing physical activity.”

The risk factors of colorectal cancer increase with age. Risk factors include having a close relative with colorectal polyps or colorectal cancer, inflammatory bowel disease (IBS), or having a genetic syndrome such as familial adenomatous polyposis (FAP) or hereditary nonpolyposis colorectal cancer. Lifestyle risk factors that may contribute to an increased risk of colorectal cancer include:

- Low fruit and vegetable intake
- Low-fiber and high-fat diet
- Overweight and obesity
- Lack of regular physical activity
- Alcohol consumption
- Tobacco use

There are not always symptoms associated with precancerous polyps or early-stage colorectal cancer. If you have symptoms, they may include:

- Blood in or on your stool (bowel movement)
- Stomach pain, aches, or cramps that don't go away
- Unexplained weight loss

The most effective way to reduce your risk of colorectal cancer is by having regular colorectal cancer screening tests beginning at 50 years of age. Don't delay. Make your screening appointment today.

For more information on Colorectal cancer visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at www.cdc.gov.

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About NCDHD

The North Central District Health Department (NCDHD) serves the communities of Enfield, East Windsor, Ellington, Stafford, Suffield, Vernon, Windham, and Windsor Locks. NCDHD is a full-time public health department with a full-time staff funded by its member towns and an annual per capita grant from the Connecticut State Department of Public Health. NCDHD provides professional public health services in the areas of health education and disease prevention, environmental health and emergency preparedness. The mission of NCDHD is to prevent disease, injury, and disability by promoting and protecting the health and well-being of the public and our environment.

For more information about NCDHD visit www.ncdhd.org.