

YANGHELI CH'TSIZLAN

WE ARE GETTING

Healthier



Healthy lifestyles and regular screenings help our people fight colorectal cancer.

SCREENING FOR LIFE: PREVENTING COLORECTAL CANCER

More Alaska Native people are getting screened for colorectal cancer than ever before, meaning fewer of our people and families are suffering because of this devastating disease. This is great news considering that cancer remains the leading cause of death among Alaska Native people, and colorectal cancer is the leading cause of new cases of cancer for our people. We are getting healthier because our people around the state now have increased access to health screenings, and are receiving more education and outreach focused on colorectal cancer prevention.

Colorectal cancer is a cancer that grows slowly in the large intestine (colon) and rectum, but it is also preventable and treatable. Early colorectal cancer has no symptoms, which is why screenings are so important. Screenings help discover pre-cancerous growths, which can be easily removed. Colorectal cancer is very treatable when found at an early stage.

Therefore, all men and women older than 50 should be screened for colorectal cancer; earlier if there is a family history of the disease. Colorectal cancer is twice as common if you have a parent, sibling or child who has had colorectal cancer, so you should let your provider know if you have a family history of the disease. The Alaska Native

Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC) recommends that Alaska Native people start receiving screenings at age 40. There are several screening options available, so it is important to talk with your provider about which screening test is right for you.

Although our people have made great progress in colorectal cancer screening and prevention, more work remains to stop this disease. In fact, the rates of new cases of cancer and deaths due to this disease are twice as high among Alaska Native people as U.S. whites.

Let's learn about colorectal cancer, talk to our family and friends about it, and meet with our providers to decide when and what screenings are right for us. Those are healthy, and possibly lifesaving, conversations we all can have that will make our people healthier.

OUR COLORECTAL CANCER SUCCESS

SCREENING ROOM

Alaska Tribal Health System's average screening rate has more than doubled from 2000 to 2012.

SCREENING ROOM



ANTHC and our Tribal health partners are working to increase screening among Alaska Native people through screening services, provider and community education, and systems and policy improvements throughout the state. We are working together to inform and inspire our people to get screened and live healthier and longer lives.

OUR CHALLENGE

Colorectal cancer screening rates continue improving greatly among our people, but those rates are inconsistent among our different regions. In some parts of our state, as many as three out of four (73%) people who need to are getting screened. In other regions, only one in three (33%) are getting screened – that is risky considering that we can detect and defeat this disease early. Let's communicate with our family, friends and neighbors to make colorectal cancer screening a healthy way of life in all of our regions and communities.



SCREENING TIPS FROM A PRO: JAKE MARTUS, PATIENT NAVIGATOR



Jake Martus is a Patient Navigator with ANTHC's Alaska Native Epidemiology

Center and Colorectal Cancer Screening Clinic. His job is to reach out to the first degree family members of colorectal cancer patients and encourage them to come in for screenings. This work is critical because colorectal cancer is twice as common if you have a first degree family member (biological parent, sibling or child) who has had colorectal cancer.

"Each day it's a different situation," said Martus. "When I contact the family

members, I try to educate them about colorectal cancer facts and that Alaska Native people have one of the highest rates of colon cancer. I also share with them how preventable it is and how a healthy lifestyle can help slow the growth of polyps in your colon."

When you go in for a colonoscopy, the doctors are looking for polyps, or little bits of tissue that have grown on the wall of your colon. These polyps can sometimes become cancerous. But when caught early through a colonoscopy, they are easily removable and help you remain cancer free.

"Many people tell me that they feel fine and they don't need the screening, but with colon cancer you never

know," said Martus. "Most people might never show symptoms until the cancer has grown. The best way to prevent colorectal cancer is by getting screened."

LEARN MORE

For more information about colorectal cancer prevention and treatment, visit or contact the following:

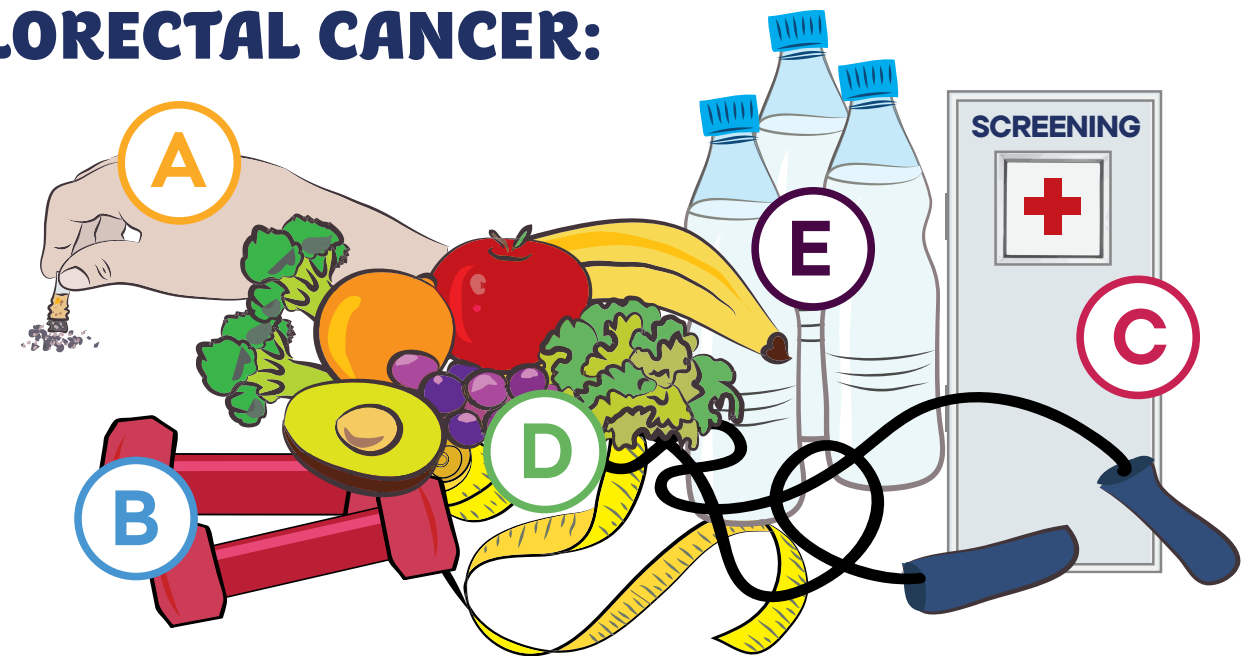
ANTHC Colorectal Cancer Screening Patient Navigators
(907) 729-4444

ANTHC Alaska Native Epidemiology Center
www.anthctoday.org/epicenter/colon.html

Colon Cancer Alliance:
www.ccalliance.org

American Cancer Society:
www.cancer.org/cancer/colonandrectumcancer/index

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO PREVENT COLORECTAL CANCER:



A **Quit smoking and/or using other forms of tobacco, including chew and iq'mik.**

B **Exercise regularly:** Physical activity can reduce your risk of colorectal cancer by as much as 50%!

C **Get screened.**

D **Eat well and keep a healthy weight.** Discuss what's best for you with your provider.

E **Limit Alcohol Consumption:** Drink more water.

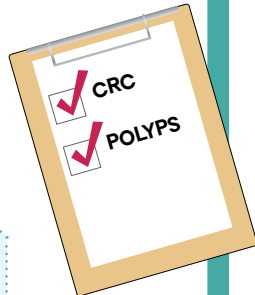
HOW TO CHOOSE THE RIGHT TEST

QUESTION: DO YOU HAVE A HISTORY OF COLORECTAL CANCER (CRC) OR POLYPS?

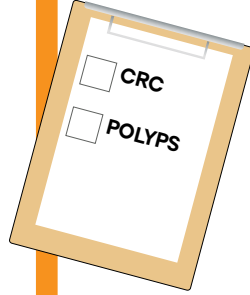


COLONOSCOPY

Provider and patient determine when testing should start



YES



NO



**ARE YOU:
40-75 years old?**

YES

NO

Maintain a healthy lifestyle to prevent CRC. Encourage friends and family to get screened.



Provider and patient decide which test is preferred

Fecal Immunochemical Test (FIT)

- Reduces death from CRC
- Safe, available, easy to complete
- Done on your own at home
- Finds cancer early by finding blood in stool
- Finds most cancers early when done every year

Flexible Sigmoidoscopy

- Reduces death from CRC
- Can prevent cancer by removing polyps (or abnormal growths in the colon) during test
- Examines half of the colon
- Finds pre-cancerous polyps. If polyps are found, a colonoscopy will be recommended
- Done every five years if no polyps are found

Colonoscopy

- Reduces death from CRC
- Can prevent cancer by removing polyps (or abnormal growths in the colon) during test
- Examines entire colon
- Finds and removes most cancers or polyps that are present at the time of the test
- Done every 10 years if no polyps are found



ALASKA NATIVE
TRIBAL HEALTH
CONSORTIUM