



Colon Cancer Fact Sheet

- Every year, about 1400 New Yorkers die from colon cancer.
- The death rate for Blacks is higher than for any other racial or ethnic group.
- Colon cancer can be prevented.
- Colonoscopy is a screening and treatment test that can prevent cancer by removing pre-cancerous growths.
- Colonoscopy can also detect cancer. When colon cancer is found at an early stage, 90% of people treated will survive more than five years.
- Colonoscopy is a picture of your colon. It uses a thin, flexible tube with a camera on one end. Medication is used to eliminate discomfort.
- Men and women age 50 and over should get a colonoscopy.
- In 2005, 45% of New Yorkers aged 50 and older had not had a colonoscopy in the last 10 years. More than 50% of Hispanic New Yorkers hadn't had one.
- Having a family history of colon cancer may increase your risk. If you do, you should be screened before age 50.
- You only need one colonoscopy every 10 years if no problems have been picked up.
- Colonoscopy can be done at a hospital or a private doctor's office.
- You need to be referred for colonoscopy by a doctor. A primary care doctor or an ob-gyn doctor can refer you for this procedure. Or you can call 311 for information on how to get a referral.
- All health insurance covers colonoscopies. If you are uninsured, call 311 for more information about colonoscopy at little or no cost.
- For some people, colonoscopy may not be the right colon cancer screening test. Talk to a doctor about other tests that might be a better choice for you. Whatever test you choose, be sure you get screened.
- Quitting smoking can reduce your risk of colon cancer.
- Exercising, watching your weight and eating right can also reduce your risk.