

ColonCancerCheck Update

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Welcome to the second edition of ColonCancerCheck Update, a quarterly newsletter on Ontario's new colorectal cancer screening program.

A Screening Success: Joe's Story

When Joe Hrechanyk, 68, went to see his new family physician for a routine examination, he had no idea it would save his life. At the appointment, Joe's physician ordered a series of tests, including a fecal occult blood test (FOBT) to screen for colorectal cancer. Joe was skeptical about doing the FOBT because he had no symptoms of colorectal cancer, no family history of the disease and was in good health. But his physician told him that since he was over the age of 50, he should be screened for colorectal cancer regularly.

Despite his apprehensions, Joe completed the FOBT. The results came back positive for blood in his stool. A positive FOBT result can occur for many reasons, and the majority of people who have a positive FOBT result do not have colorectal cancer. Joe's physician referred him for a colonoscopy to follow up on the results. During Joe's colonoscopy, two polyps were found. The smaller polyp was malignant, and was removed during the colonoscopy. Joe required bowel resection surgery to fully remove the second polyp.

Today, Joe is near the end of his recovery period and feels great. Looking back, he can't believe how easy the screening process was, and can't imagine the outcome he might have had if he had not been screened for colorectal cancer.

If colorectal cancer is caught early through regular screening, like Joe's was, there is a 90 per cent chance it can be cured. It is important for family health care providers to discuss colorectal cancer screening options with their patients to determine which one is right for them.

If You Were See-Through...

...it would be easier to spot colon cancer. That was the message the honourable George Smitherman, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, gave at a press conference in March, 2008, where he announced the launch of the ColonCancerCheck public awareness campaign. Key stakeholders, the media and the public gathered at the event in Toronto, where they were introduced to Canada's first population-based colorectal cancer screening program.

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Fast Facts

What Is ColonCancer Check?
Canada's first population-based colorectal cancer screening program.

Why Should Ontarians Be Screened?

When caught early through regular screening, colorectal cancer is 90 per cent curable; less than a quarter of Ontarians aged 50-74 did a fecal occult blood test (FOBT) in the last two years.

When Should People Be Screened?

Average risk individuals 50 years of age or older using an FOBT once every two years, and increased risk individuals (i.e. with a parent, sibling or child with colorectal cancer) by colonoscopy starting at age 50, or 10 years earlier than the relative's age at diagnosis, whichever comes first.

If You Were See-Through... continued from page 1

Minister Smitherman, Dr. Terry Sullivan, President and CEO, Cancer Care Ontario, Dr. Linda Rabeneck, Medical Director, ColonCancerCheck, Dr. Joshua Tepper, Assistant Deputy Minister, and Joe Hrechanyk, whose early stage colorectal cancer was detected by FOBT screening and is now in remission, all shared their experiences and enthusiasm for the new screening program.

A new cutting-edge television advertising campaign, featuring computer-generated see-through characters was also unveiled during the press conference. The print, TV and online ads have run across the province, reaching Ontarians in 22 languages.

The Minister also announced that as of April 1, 2008, ColonCancerCheck FOBT kits are now widely available to eligible Ontarians. Average risk individuals 50 years and older can receive FOBT kits from their family health care provider. Those without a family health provider can receive information on obtaining a kit by calling INFOLine at 1-866-410-5853.

The program also promotes screening for individuals at increased risk (i.e. with a parent, sibling or child with colorectal cancer) by colonoscopy, starting at age 50, or 10 years earlier than the relative's age at diagnosis, whichever comes first. The government has provided funding to increase colonoscopy access across the province.

With the launch of the provider and public awareness campaign and FOBT screening, the second phase of the ColonCancerCheck program is well on its way towards helping more individuals access colorectal cancer screening, and ultimately reduce the lives lost to this disease.

ColonCancerCheck Milestones

- Health care providers received program information kits developed to provide further support in the roll-out of ColonCancerCheck
- ColonCancerCheck brochures are available to Ontarians through their physicians' offices, pharmacies and online at the program website www.ColonCancerCheck.ca
- In March, a cutting-edge television advertising campaign, featuring computer-generated see-through characters, was unveiled. The print, TV and online ads will reach Ontarians across the province in 22 languages
- The ColonCancerCheck website launched in March providing the public and health care providers with information about the program
- As of April 1, 2008, ColonCancerCheck FOBT kits were distributed to primary care providers in Ontario. The branded kits include easy-to-follow instructions that have few dietary restrictions

Questions, Comments or Feedback

We want to hear from you!

By phone:
1-866-662-9233

For more information go to:
www.ColonCancerCheck.ca

By email:
colorectalcancerscreening@cancercare.on.ca



Fast Facts

When Will ColonCancerCheck FOBT Kits Be Available?

As of April 1, 2008, branded FOBT kits were distributed to family health care providers across the province, and are also available for people without a family health care provider by calling the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care's INFOLine.

Where Is More Information Available?

Visit
www.ColonCancerCheck.ca
for more details
about the program.