

## Add Colon Cancer Screening To Your DIY List

(NAPSA)—As summer winds down and we head back into the hustle and bustle of fall, it's a great time to take stock of things you may have put off earlier in the year. But as you check a few "Do It Yourself" home projects off your list, make sure you don't forget about your most important investment: your health. Make this the time you get up to date with your health screenings...and if you've been avoiding colon cancer screening, you can now add that to your at-home DIY list, too.

Consider this: Colon cancer claims nearly 50,000 lives a year, but with proper screening, you don't have to become one of these statistics, and the process can be a lot simpler and more private than you may realize.

### Reason to Screen

Screening is critical because most colon cancers develop slowly over several years. In fact, before cancer develops, a polyp—or non-cancerous growth—usually appears on the inner lining of the colon or rectum. These polyps may take 10 to 15 years to become cancer, so early identification and removal of them can effectively prevent cancer from ever forming. In addition, because most polyps and early-stage cancers cause no symptoms, the only way to detect them early is through regular screening.

### The Problem

The American Cancer Society and the USPSTF (U.S. Preventive Services Task Force) recommend that men and women get screened for colon cancer beginning at age 50; unfortunately, only half of those who should get screened actually do. As a result, many patients aren't diagnosed until the late stages, when treatment is difficult and survival rates low.

The challenge with colon cancer is that while the most widely adopted screening option—colonoscopy—is highly effective, the procedure is invasive and usually requires bowel preparation and sedation, making it undesirable for



**Saving yourself from colon cancer is more vital and a lot less difficult than many people realize.**

many. In fact, a study published in the Archives of Internal Medicine found that compliance with colonoscopy is a mere 38 percent.<sup>1</sup>

"There is a clear need for new, accurate, less-invasive options that will motivate people who are unable or unwilling to get screened," said Michael Sapienza, CEO of the Colon Cancer Alliance. "The opportunity is clear: The more people screened, the fewer cases of colon cancer we will see."

### A Potential Solution

Now, there's an FDA-approved, noninvasive cancer screening test that's just what the doctor ordered, and you can do your part at home. Unlike other noninvasive colon cancer tests—such as those that only look for blood in the stool—Cologuard analyzes a patient-provided stool sample for the presence of DNA biomarkers known to be associated with cancer and precancerous cells in addition to blood. It's this combination of blood and DNA detection that makes Cologuard a powerful new weapon in the war on colon cancer.

### How It Works

Taking the test is simple. First, a licensed health care provider prescribes the test and a collection kit is sent to your home. The box arrives at your doorstep, so you can collect your sample according to your schedule. Simply collect a stool sample at your convenience (no medication, dietary restrictions, bowel preparation, sedation, time off of work or transportation required) and send the kit back to

the lab for testing in the prepaid mailer. You get the results from your physician in as few as two weeks after returning the sample. If the result is positive, the clinician will refer you for a diagnostic colonoscopy. If the test is negative, you can continue to participate in a screening program at an interval and with a method appropriate for you based on a discussion with your physician.

### Doctor's Advice

"From self-exams for breast cancer to mole checks for skin cancer, we encourage patients to stay vigilant and take health into their own hands," said Lawrence Varner, M.D., a family physician. "Unfortunately, when it comes to deadly colon cancer, getting patients screened is an uphill battle.

Luckily, at-home options like Cologuard take away many of the excuses I often hear from patients who avoid other colon cancer screening options."

"I admit it, I haven't always been proactive when it comes to my health, and when my doctor recommended a colonoscopy as part of routine cancer screening, I avoided it," said one user. "When I learned about Cologuard, I finally had the motivation I needed. The test took just five minutes at home without any prep and within a week I had the results and they were positive. A month later, after a follow-up colonoscopy that confirmed there were cancerous cells, I had surgery to remove several tumors, one of which my oncologist believes could have metastasized. Today, I'm on the road to better health and thankful to have been offered Cologuard as a screening option."

If you're over 50, get screened. Do it now before the busy holiday season is upon us. It's one project that's actually much easier than you may imagine.

### Learn More

To learn more about the prescription-only test, visit [www.CologuardTest.com](http://www.CologuardTest.com).

1 JAMA Internal Medicine (2012) 172 (7) :575-582; <http://archinte.jamanetwork.com/article.aspx?articleid=1134849>  
Cologuard is not for everyone. Cologuard is not a replacement for diagnostic or surveillance colonoscopy in patients at high risk for colorectal cancer. Both false positives and false negatives do occur. Any positive result should be followed by a diagnostic colonoscopy. A negative Cologuard test result does not guarantee absence of cancer or advanced adenoma. Following a negative result, patients should continue participating in a screening program at an interval and with a method appropriate for the individual patient. Cologuard performance when used for repeat testing has not been evaluated or established. Cologuard results should be interpreted with caution for individuals over age 75 as the rate of false positive results increases with age.