



## A Colon Cancer Screening Test You Can Take At Home

(NAPSA)—There's good news for Americans 50 or older who are at average risk for colon cancer and who have not been screened. A new test that is designed to be convenient and noninvasive is now available. The best part? You can do it at home.

When not detected, colon cancer remains one of the deadliest forms of cancer. However, for many Americans, like 73-year-old Dan Meaney of Madison, New Jersey, getting screened is low on their to-do list. The American Cancer Society recommends that Americans who are not at high risk for colon cancer start screening at age 50. Yet people often avoid it because the gold standard—colonoscopy—can be invasive, inconvenient and unpleasant. But when Meaney heard about a new, noninvasive screening test that he could take at home, he decided it was finally time to put his health first and take the test.

"Cologuard came as a blessing in disguise," says Meaney. "I had avoided having a colonoscopy for over 20 years. But when I heard there was a new option that didn't require any dietary restrictions, prep or sedation, I immediately asked my doctor about it."

And it was a good thing he did. Meaney's test came back positive and he was scheduled for a follow-up colonoscopy. Doctors discovered and removed a precancerous polyp. Meaney is cancer free, but for some, a positive Cologuard test can mean the presence of cancer itself.

More than half of colorectal cancer-related deaths could be avoided with regular screenings. Nevertheless, 23 million Americans do not get screened as recommended. The lack of patient compliance with screening has meant that in more than 60 percent of all cases, colorectal cancer is detected at a late stage, making treatment difficult and survival rates a mere 12 percent. The good news is that, if caught early, colon cancer can be treated successfully with five-year survival rates greater than 90 percent, and when precancer-



**Colorectal cancer is treatable if caught early. Early detection through screening is the key.**

ous polyps are removed, they cannot develop into cancer, underscoring the importance of routine screening.

"There has been a 30 percent reduction in cases of colon cancer in the last decade largely due to an increase in screening. The message is clear—the more people screened, the fewer cases of colon cancer and the more lives we save," said Eric Hargis, CEO of the Colon Cancer Alliance. "Unfortunately, one-third of Americans at average risk for colon cancer have not been screened. There is a significant need for a highly effective, at-home screening method, particularly for individuals unable or unwilling to have a colonoscopy. The Colon Cancer Alliance welcomes Cologuard as a new, patient-friendly screening method that has no required preparation, except perhaps a good meal."

Approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in August 2014, Cologuard is a noninvasive screening test that looks for both altered DNA and blood biomarkers known to be associated with cancer and precancers. Every day, cells are shed from the colon wall during the digestion process. As part of this process, normal cells, along with abnormal cells from precancers or cancers, are shed into stool as it passes through the colon. It is the DNA

released from these cells that Cologuard looks for.

Getting a Cologuard test is simple. First, a licensed health care provider prescribes a Cologuard test and a collection kit is sent to the patient's home. The patient collects a stool sample at home at his/her convenience (no medication, dietary restrictions, bowel preparation, sedation, time off from work or transportation required) and then sends the kit back to the lab for testing in a pre-paid mailer. The patient receives the results from his/her physician in as little as two weeks after sending in the sample. If the result is positive, the doctor will refer the patient for a diagnostic colonoscopy. If the test is negative, the patient should continue to participate in a screening program at an interval and with a method appropriate to him or her.

"Everyone who has avoided getting screened for colon cancer should know about this test," said Meaney. "I tell all my friends over 50 that there are no more excuses because getting screened is easier than ever!"

Cologuard is available by prescription only and is intended for men and women 50 years or older who are at average risk for colorectal cancer. It is not a replacement for diagnostic or surveillance colonoscopy in high-risk individuals. Patients should talk to their doctor to determine if Cologuard is the right option for them. Both false positives and false negatives do occur. In a clinical study of Cologuard, 13 percent of people without cancer or precancer tested positive. Any positive should be followed by a diagnostic colonoscopy. 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.

To learn more, visit [www.CologuardTest.com](http://www.CologuardTest.com). Rx Only.