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## **March is National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month**

*Talk with your provider about when to get screened, screening options*

LANSING, Mich. – Colorectal cancer is the third leading cause of cancer-related deaths, and National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month offers a perfect opportunity to talk to your doctor about screening for the disease.

The American Cancer Society estimates there will be 4,510 new cases of colorectal cancer and 1,670 deaths due to the disease in Michigan this year. Through colorectal cancer screening, doctors can find and remove hidden growths (called “polyps”) in the colon before they become cancerous. Removing polyps can prevent cancer altogether.

“Adults age 50 and older should be regularly screened for colorectal cancer,” said Dr. Eden Wells, MDHHS chief medical executive. “Unfortunately, many people aren’t getting tested because they don’t believe they are at risk or they aren’t aware of the different testing or screening options. The importance of early detection cannot be overstated. Make it a priority to discuss the different testing options, including at-home tests, with your provider.”

Black people suffer disproportionately from colorectal cancer. In 2014 in Michigan, the rate of new cases was 44.54 per 100,000 for black residents compared to 35.3 per 100,000 for white residents. In 2015, the death rate from colorectal cancer was 19.3 per 100,000 for black residents compared to 13.2 per 100,000 for white residents.

Colorectal cancer risk increases after age 50. However, if you have a family history of colorectal cancer or polyps, talk with your doctor about starting testing before age 50. Many cases of colorectal cancer have no symptoms especially early on when it can be more effectively treated.

There are several screening options available, including colonoscopy and simple take-home tests. Many health insurance plans, including the Healthy Michigan Plan, cover lifesaving preventive tests. Check with your health plan to find out the details of what colorectal cancer screening is covered.

For resources for uninsured residents, and for more information about testing and prevention, visit the [MDHHS’s cancer prevention and control website](#).

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