



### March is National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month

Colorectal Cancer is the second leading cause of cancer in both men and women in Maine. It's 90% treatable when detected early and because there are often no symptoms, screening is the only way to detect it.

Get screened regularly starting at age 50, or earlier if you are at risk. In addition to age, risk factors are:

- Physical inactivity
- Alcohol consumption
- Personal or family history of colorectal cancer and/or polyps
- Smoking
- Poor nutrition
- Being overweight

When symptoms do occur they're usually one or more of the following:

- Blood in the stool

- Diarrhea
- Change in bowel movements
- Constipation
- Fatigue
- Vomiting
- Stools that are narrower than usual
- Unexplained weight loss
- Feeling as if the bowel doesn't completely empty
- Abdominal discomfort such as frequent gas pains, bloating, fullness, or cramps

Be aware of symptoms, get screened regularly starting at age 50, earlier if you have more risk factors, and help reduce your risk by:

- Eating more fiber, fruits, and veggies
- Cutting back on red meat
- Exercise at least 30 minutes a day five or more days per week

### March is National Nutrition Month

Visit [www.eatjustonemore.com](http://www.eatjustonemore.com) to find simple ways to add a serving of fruits, veggies and lean protein to your diet. Take the "Just One More for Healthy Living" pledge for fun ideas on how you and your family can "eat just one more" for better health. Check out the website and follow these basic tips for good nutrition:

- **Be Creative.** Try something different, like washing and freezing small bunches of grapes. Try it with bananas too!
- **Cut Down on Fat.** Try low-fat dairy products, skinless poultry and lean meats.
- **Serve healthy snacks and have smaller meals.** Stock your kitchen with healthy lunch and snack foods, such as raisins, popcorn, sliced vegetables and fruit.
- **Do not use food as punishment or reward.**
- **Keep Track.** Let your kids "eat the rainbow." Keep a chart on the fridge so your kids can record the colors of fruits and vegetables they eat each day.
- **Involve Your Kids.** Kids are more likely to stick with a plan for good nutrition if they have helped create it. Have them plan, shop, and help prepare meals, and find out what they think will be fun activities as you track and eat your way to better health.

## March 23 is American Diabetes Alert Day

People with type 2 diabetes can live for years without realizing they have the disease. In Maine one out of every four people with diabetes do not know they have it. As many as 40% of adults ages 40 to 74 may have pre-diabetes, meaning they are at greater risk for developing type 2 diabetes and its deadly complications. The good news is, many at risk can prevent or delay the onset of the disease by:

- Eating nutritious foods in moderate amounts
- Being physically active every day.

To find out your risk for type 2 diabetes take the Diabetes Risk Test this month by calling 1-800-DIABETES (1-800-342-2383) or by visiting [www.diabetes.org/alert](http://www.diabetes.org/alert).

The test will ask you to answer simple questions about your weight, age, family history and other potential risk factors for type 2 diabetes.

Your risk of developing diabetes increases with your weight. And once you have diabetes you will have it for the rest of your life, so it's important to prevent it to help avoid:

- Heart disease
- Stroke
- Kidney disease
- Eye damage
- Nerve damage that can lead to amputations.

## Smokeless Tobacco and Your Children

What does the tobacco industry do when clean air laws prohibit smoking? They introduce "smokeless" products as a way to enjoy tobacco anywhere and anytime. But smokeless does not mean harmless, especially for kids.

Many have been fooled into thinking that smokeless tobacco is safer than cigarettes because it produces no smoke. But smokeless tobacco is just as dangerous, causing addiction, disease, and death. With products like electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes), Snus pouches, and sticks and strips that are designed to look like toothpicks or breath fresheners, the tobacco industry is working hard to addict your child to its product.



To help keep that from happening talk to your children about:

- How smokeless tobacco is just as addictive as cigarettes
- How smokeless products are made to look like candy to get them hooked

The new smokeless tobacco is still tobacco, leading to addiction and dependence.

## What You Do For You



Has the day-to-day of life ever gone so badly that you just had to laugh? It may sound strange but that's a good thing. Laughter and the positive thoughts that go along with it are known to reduce or prevent the effects of illness and disease. Recent studies have even shown a link between pessimism and a higher risk of dying before age 65.

People who express positive emotions, such as optimism, produce lower amounts of stress hormone, have stronger immune systems, and reduced risk of chronic disease. If you're a pessimist - or know someone who is - try the following:

- Take care of yourself by eating a healthy diet, exercising regularly and getting enough sleep.
- Express your emotions honestly so you can begin to deal with what is bothering you.
- Confide in someone - your mate, a good friend or a trusted relative.
- View the cup as half full instead of half empty.