

Provider Bulletin

March 2026

March is Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month

Colorectal cancer is the third leading cause of cancer-related deaths in both men and women in the United States. Regular colorectal cancer screening is one of the most powerful tools for preventing colorectal cancer.

The American Cancer Society recommends the following preventive measures for your patients:

- Start the screening process at age 45 or older.
- Engage in regular physical activity and maintain a healthy weight.
- Consume a diet rich in fruits, vegetables and whole grains.
- Limit alcohol consumption.
- Avoid smoking.

Here are some ways to improve colorectal cancer screening for your patients:

- Update patient history annually to document colorectal cancer screening, including the type of test and date completed.
- Encourage patients who are resistant to having a colonoscopy to complete a stool test at home.
- Communicate to members that FOBT/FIT has fewer dietary restrictions and requires fewer samples (see HEDIS® Tip Sheet Colorectal Cancer Screening [COL] 27).
- Utilize standing orders and empower office staff to distribute FOBT or FIT kits to patients who need colorectal cancer screening or to prepare referrals for colonoscopy.
- Document patients with ileostomies (implies colon removal) and patients with a history of colon cancer.
- When documenting a member-reported colonoscopy, flexible sigmoidoscopy, FIT-DNA test, CT colonography or FOBT, always include a date of service when available. The year alone is acceptable for compliance.

For more information on colorectal cancer prevention and treatment options, visit [Cancer.org/cancer/colon-rectal-cancer.html](https://www.cancer.org/cancer/colon-rectal-cancer.html).