

COLON HEALTH and African Nova Scotians

Colorectal cancer is the **second leading cause of death** in Nova Scotia. Studies in the United States found that men of African descent had the highest rates of colorectal cancer, and were **32 per cent more likely** to die of colorectal cancer than the general population.*



Symptoms of colon problems

There are some symptoms associated with colon health issues. Some men have more symptoms than others. The severity of the symptoms does not always match the severity of the health problem, **so it is very important to talk to your health team about colon health.**

Symptoms may include: Long lasting constipation/diarrhea ■ Narrow stools
■ Gas, bloating, abdominal cramps ■ Bloody stool ■ Unexplained weight loss/loss of appetite ■ Feeling of being full all the time

Screening and early detection

Every two years, Nova Scotians aged 50-74 will receive a home colon screening kit in the mail from the Colon Cancer Prevention Program of Nova Scotia. It is important to use the test.

- Regular screening is important because colon cancer can develop without any symptoms
- When found early, colon cancer is preventable and treatable
- The colon screening test is easy and can be done in the privacy of your own home
- If you don't receive a kit, talk to your family doctor, or the NS Brotherhood team

For information on the *Home Screening Program*, visit www.cancercare.ns.ca or call **1-866-599-2267**

*Reference can be found online at www.NSbrotherhood.ca

Risk factors

Family history: Risk for colorectal cancer is higher if one or more close relatives have had colorectal cancer

Race: Rates of colorectal cancer are higher for men of African ancestry

Gender: Men are more affected by colorectal cancer than women

Polyps in rectum or colon: Personal or family history of polyps increases the risk of developing colorectal cancer

Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD) and Type 2 Diabetes: People who have inflammatory bowel disease or type 2 diabetes are at higher risk of developing colorectal cancer

Maintaining colon health:

- Avoid eating processed meats (such as sausages and sandwich meats)
- Avoid cooking meat and fish at high temperatures: when meat and fish are cooked at high temperatures (such as frying and barbecuing), chemicals which can increase risk of colorectal cancer are formed
- Be physically active every day: aim for 150 minutes of physical activity per week, at least 10 minutes at a time
- Choose chicken, fish, beans, legumes, or eggs instead of red meat
- Eat plenty of fibre from foods such as whole grains and legumes
- Limit sugary drinks, fast food, and high fat snacks like potato chips
- Talk to your health team about taking a vitamin D supplement
- Include garlic often when preparing foods

Talk to your health team about colon health



The
Nova Scotia
Brotherhood
Team



NSBI
Registered
Dietitian



Your
Family
Doctor



Your
Family
Practice
Nurse

Contact Nova Scotia Brotherhood to learn more about colon health or to make an appointment with a member of the team about another health concern:

902.434.0824

NSbrotherhood@nshealth.ca

www.NSbrotherhood.ca

NOVA SCOTIA  BROTHERHOOD

 nova scotia
health authority