

National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month is Almost Over—Don't Forget to Follow-Up

The month of March, and National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month are almost over—but that doesn't mean that the colorectal cancer awareness messages to your patients should stop until next year. Remind patients who have taken home a fecal occult blood test kit to use it. Follow up with patients on all screening results, even negative ones—everyone likes to hear good news. Remember, the appropriate follow-up for a positive fecal occult blood test result is a colonoscopy, not another fecal occult blood test.

Guidelines to Guide Next Steps When Polyps Are Found:

A recent survey by the National Cancer Institute found that gastroenterologists and surgeons are performing surveillance colonoscopies at more frequent intervals than those recommended by evidence-based guidelines. For example, 24% of gastroenterologists and 54% of surgeons recommended a colonoscopy, either alone or with another procedure, at least every five years after the identification of a small, benign, hyperplastic polyp. Medical guidelines do not recommend any follow-up colonoscopy for hyperplastic polyps because their presence has not been shown to increase the risk of colorectal cancer. Review the [evidence-based Colorectal Cancer Screening and Surveillance Guidelines](#) from the American Cancer Society.

For More Information for Healthcare Providers:

- [MLN Guide to Medicare Preventive Services for Healthcare Professionals](#) (see Chapter 11)
- [MLN Preventive Services Educational Products Webpage](#)
- [MLN Cancer Screenings Brochure](#)
- [MLN Quick Reference Information: Medicare Preventive Services](#)
- [National Colorectal Cancer Roundtable](#)
- [National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month website](#)
- [The National Cancer Institute website](#)

Thank you for helping CMS spread the word regarding the importance of colorectal cancer screening.