

March is National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month

March is National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month. As you know, colorectal cancer is the third most common type of cancer, and the second leading cause of cancer death. Like many other diseases, older adults are at greater risk for colorectal cancer. CMS wants to take this opportunity to remind health care professionals to encourage their Medicare patients ages 50 and older to get screened for colorectal cancer. Medicare covers colorectal cancer screening tests and procedures, specifically:

- Fecal Occult Blood Test
- Flexible Sigmoidoscopy
- Screening Colonoscopy
- Barium Enema

These screening tests can detect colorectal cancer early when it is most treatable, and can identify people at high risk for developing this type of cancer.

CMS needs your help to get the word out to your Medicare patients and their caregivers about the benefits of colorectal cancer screening. We hope that you will encourage your eligible Medicare patients to take advantage of this potentially life saving benefit.

For more information about Medicare's colorectal cancer screening benefit, including coverage, coding, billing, and reimbursement, refer to "The Guide to Medicare Preventive Services for Physicians, Providers, Suppliers, and Other Health Care Professionals" located at www.cms.hhs.gov/MedlearnProducts/downloads/PSGUID.pdf on the CMS Medicare Learning Network (MLN) web page. In addition, CMS has issued Special Edition Medlearn Matters article SE0613 on colorectal cancer screening—click on the following link www.cms.hhs.gov/MedlearnMattersArticles/downloads/SE0613.pdf to review this article.

The CMS website also has a prevention website which contains a section on colorectal cancer screening. Click on www.cms.hhs.gov, select "Medicare", and scroll down to "Prevention" to find the colorectal cancer screening section.

Colorectal cancer is preventable, treatable, and beatable. Encourage your patients to get screened—it could save their life.