



News from the Office of
ERIE COUNTY EXECUTIVE MARK POLONCARZ

NEWS RELEASE

Health Commissioner Dr. Gale Burstein

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March is National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month

Early Detection Saves Lives, Finds Cancers Before Symptoms Appear

ERIE COUNTY, NY— The Erie County Department of Health (“ECDOH”) supports National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month, dedicated to increasing awareness of the importance of early detection of colorectal cancer through a nationwide campaign held in March.

“Colonoscopies are the best method to detect colorectal cancer early when it is easier to treat and before it causes symptoms. Having a colonoscopy after age 50 can lower the risk of dying from colorectal cancer,” **said Erie County Health Commissioner Dr. Gale Burstein.** “Performing a yearly FIT (fecal immunochemical test) test is also a highly effective method for detecting and thereby helping to prevent progression of colorectal cancer. The FIT test is a less invasive, convenient and cost effective screening option that allows patients to procure samples at home that are then sent to a lab for analysis. FIT has accuracy rates very near those of colonoscopy.”

Through its Cancer Services Program, ECDOH provides cancer screening, diagnostic, treatment, and support services for uninsured and underinsured individuals aged 40 and over for colorectal, cervical and breast cancer. The ECDOH Cancer Services Program can determine eligibility for services, assist with scheduling screening examinations, and provide information at no cost. Individuals can contact the Cancer Screening Program at (716) 886-9201, or utilize the Cancer Services Program website, www.cspwny.org.

In celebration of March as Colorectal Health Awareness Month, TOPS Markets has partnered with Cancer Services Program to provide residents with a **FREE** "FIT Kit", a simple take-home test used as an early detection aid for colon cancer. Anyone 50 years and older can pick up a test kit at select TOPS Markets stores during the month of March to determine their risk for colon cancer. The kit is offered for free to individuals without insurance and covered in full by most major insurance plans for individuals with insurance.

For complete details and a list of participating TOPS Markets locations, please visit TopsMarkets.com, call 1-866-4CANCER (442-2262) or visit the TOPS Pharmacy.

Additionally, ECDOH is working with the Buffalo and Fort Erie Public Bridge Authority to provide blue lighting on the Peace Bridge on select dates during the month of March to bring awareness to this important health issue.

For more information on colorectal cancer and the Cancer Screening Program:

Erie County Department of Health

<http://www2.erie.gov/health/>

For more information on colorectal cancer:

New York State Department of Health

www.health.ny.gov/diseases/cancer/colorectal

The American Cancer Society

<http://www.cancer.org/>

The National Cancer Institute

<http://www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/factsheet/detection/colorectal-screening>