HEALTH DEPARTMENT NOTES MARCH-COLORECTAL CANCER AWARENESS MONTH!

The Henry and Stark County Health Departments along with the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) announce that March has been designated National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month.

Colorectal Cancer is the second leading cancer killer in the United States. And yet, this need not be the case. Studies show if everyone age 50 or older had regular screening tests, at least one-third of deaths from this cancer could be avoided.

To better inform the public about this deadly disease the staff of the Henry and Stark County Health Department offers the following facts on Colorectal Cancer. Colorectal cancer is cancer that occurs in the colon or rectum. Sometimes it is called colon cancer, for short.

Who gets Colorectal Cancer? Both men and women can get colorectal cancer. Colorectal cancer is most often found in people 50 and older. Therefore, the risk of getting colorectal cancer increases with age.

Are you at High Risk? Your risk of colorectal cancer may be higher than average if: You or a close relative have had colorectal polyps or colorectal cancer. You have inflammatory bowel disease. People at high risk for colorectal cancer may need earlier or more frequent tests than other people. Talk with your doctor about when you should begin screening and how often you should be tested.

If you're 50 or older, getting a screening test for colorectal cancer could save your life.

Here's how:
* Colorectal cancer usually starts from polyps in the colon or rectum. A polyp is a growth that shouldn't be there.
* Over time, some polyps can turn into cancer.
* Screening tests can find polyps, so they can be removed before they turn into cancer.
* Screening tests can also find colorectal cancer early. When it is found early, the chance of being cured is good.

People who have polyps or colorectal cancer sometimes don't have symptoms, especially at first. This means that someone could have polyps or colorectal cancer and not know it. That is why having a screening test is so important. Some people with colorectal polyps or cancer do have symptoms.

They may include:
* Blood in or on your stool (bowel movement).
* Pain, aches, or cramps in your stomach that happen a lot and you don't know why.
* A change in bowel habits, such as having stools that are narrower than usual.
* Losing weight and you don't know why.

If you have any of these symptoms, talk with your doctor or healthcare provider. These symptoms may also be caused by something other than cancer. However, the only way to know what is causing them is to see your doctor.

The Health Department has "Do At Home" Colorectal Cancer Testing Kit available through their offices. The cost of the testing kits is a donation of the recipient's choosing.

For more information call the Health Department at (309) 852-5272 Main Office or 792-4011 Colona Office or visit our website at www.henrystarkhealth.com or find us on Facebook at Henry and Stark County Health Departments.