

March 2021

Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month Social Media Toolkit



**80% in
Every
Community**

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Tip: Viewing this PDF in Google Chrome? Use “Ctrl+Click” on links to open them in a new tab.

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ABOUT THIS TOOLKIT

This toolkit is designed to help stakeholders implement evidence-based practices when communicating about colorectal cancer. It can also help you plan, implement, and evaluate your social media strategy and make the case for why it's important.

Don't have the time or capacity to implement this toolkit? Don't fret! You can still engage your audience by retweeting messages from [@GWCancer](#)

WHO SHOULD USE THIS TOOLKIT?

Public health professionals, cancer control professionals, cancer centers, coalitions, community-based organizations and other stakeholders can use this toolkit and adapt its messaging for their unique audiences and areas of expertise. This toolkit includes tailored messaging for [Hispanic](#), [Asian](#), and [LGBTQ+](#) populations.

WHAT IS COLORECTAL CANCER AWARENESS MONTH?

Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month was established in 2000 as an annual opportunity to raise awareness about the disease and focus on research into its cause, prevention, diagnosis, treatment, and survivorship. The goal is to support those affected by colorectal cancer and encourage health-promoting behaviors such as getting screened, staying active, and eating a balanced diet. "80% in Every Community" is an initiative from the National Colorectal Cancer Roundtable (NCCRT) that emphasizes these goals and aims to achieve 80% colorectal screening rates in every community (NCCRT, 2021).



SOCIAL MEDIA 101

This toolkit offers recommended posts for [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [LinkedIn](#). For information about social media platforms, key terms, and strategies to promote health observances using social media, please review the social media guide available at <http://bit.ly/GWCCSMTKs>.

BEST PRACTICES FOR COMMUNICATING ABOUT COLORECTAL CANCER

According to the American Cancer Society, among cancers that affect both men and women, colorectal cancer is the third leading cause of cancer-related deaths in the United States (ACS, 2021). Colorectal cancer is expected to cause close to 53,000 deaths in 2021 alone (ACS, 2021). Screening continues to be a proven tool to reduce the burden of colorectal cancer in the United States. However, barriers to screening still remain. These barriers include:

- Procrastination due to being busy or fear of unfavorable test results
- Perceived high cost of screening tests
- Strong beliefs about the unpleasantness of the test procedure or preparation
- Misbelief that having no family history of colorectal cancer means screening is not needed (NCCRT 2019, p.17).

Effective themes for screening messages include, “screening helps prevent colorectal cancer; you can do the screening at home; and other individuals like you found a way” (NCCRT, 2019, p.24). Despite improvements in colorectal cancer screening rates over time, 1 in 3 adults ages 50-75 are not getting screened as recommended (NCCRT, 2019, p. 7). Of those adults, there is a disparity amongst those in rural, low income, and racial and ethnic minority communities with lower screening rates (NCCRT, 2021). As a result, messages should also highlight the impact of colorectal cancer across all communities and emphasize how many lives could be saved through screening.

When crafting materials and messages to encourage screening, both high and low health literacy audiences benefit from simple messages and illustrations (Meppelink, Smit, Buurman & van Weert, 2015). Consider making your messages and content highly shareable, as Cutrona et al. (2013) found that many adults are willing to share their screening experiences via email or social media.

EFFECTIVE THEMES FOR SCREENING MESSAGES INCLUDE...

1. Screening helps prevent colorectal cancer

- **Promote the benefits of screening in prevention and early detection.** Individuals may not be aware of or understand the benefits of screening for colorectal cancer (Jones, Devers, Kuzel & Woolf, 2010; Nagelhout, Comarell, Samadder & Wu, 2017).
- **Explain that screening can prevent colorectal cancer by detecting polyps that can easily be removed.** Messages should highlight the fact that colorectal cancer can be prevented or detected at an early stage through regular screening (NCCRT, 2019, p. 24). Such messaging can also address fear of an unfavorable test result, which is a commonly cited barrier to screening (Jones, Devers, Kuzel & Woolf, 2010; Nagelhout, Comarell, Samadder & Wu, 2017).
- **Encourage physicians to remind patients to be screened.** Patients who visit their physicians frequently and who also report positive interactions with their physicians are most likely to report being screened for colorectal cancer (Peterson et al., 2016).
- **Emphasize that colorectal cancer screening receives an “A” rating from the U.S. Preventative Services Task Force (USPSTF) and is a well-tested, highly effective tool for reducing the burden of colorectal cancer.** USPSTF recommends screening for average risk adults beginning at age 50 until at least age 75 (USPSTF, 2016).

2. You can do the screening at home

- For those at average risk of colorectal cancer, **highlight screening options that can be done at home to address a variety of barriers** such as procrastination due to being busy and/or concern about colonoscopy preparation (USPSTF, 2016; NCCRT, 2019, p. 27).
- **Promote multiple screening options**, such as fecal immunochemical test (FIT), high sensitivity fecal occult blood testing (FOBT), sigmoidoscopy or colonoscopy. Presenting screening options

other than colonoscopy can reduce anxiety associated with the procedure and preparations beforehand (NCCRT, 2019, p. 27).

- **Provide information about affordable at-home screening options** to encourage “consumers to take control of their health, while addressing concerns about affordability” (NCCRT, 2019, p. 23).

3. Other individuals like you found a way to get screened

- **Use culturally appropriate and diverse testimonials** to reach underserved and underrepresented populations with lower screening rates, particularly African Americans, Asian Americans, and Hispanics/Latinos (NCCRT, 2017, 2019). Showcase images and stories of people that are familiar to the audience you are trying to reach (NCCRT, 2019).
- **Use testimonials with cancer survivors** to increase perceived severity of colorectal cancer, which is associated with getting screened (McQueen et al., 2019).
- **Make testimonial messages and information emotionally interesting, or vivid**, as this is strongly associated with increased knowledge and intention to get screened (Dillard & Main, 2013).
- **Ensure messages and testimonials have a positive, reassuring tone and emphasize that screening is “worth it”** (Weaver et al., 2015).

SAMPLE TWEETS AND FACEBOOK POSTS

Tip: These correspond to the strategies above.



| Tweets | Facebook Posts | Message Category |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| March is #ColorectalCancer Awareness Month! What can you do to reduce your risk of colorectal #cancer? Learn more: http://bit.ly/2Fjfs7t | March is Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month. It's the second leading cause of cancer death for men and women combined, but there are ways to lower your risk: http://bit.ly/2Fjfs7t | 1 |
| There are several screening options available for #ColorectalCancer, including some affordable at-home options. Talk to your doc about getting screened: http://bit.ly/2H1dla2 | A colonoscopy is one of several screening tests for colorectal cancer. Some can even be done from the comfort of your home at a low cost. Talk to your doctor to learn more about getting screened: http://bit.ly/2H1dla2 | 1,2 |
| #ColorectalCancer screening saves lives – take a second and share this brochure with someone you love: http://bit.ly/2HrNB4h | If you or someone you know is 50 or older, getting a colorectal cancer screening test could save your life. Do your part and encourage a loved one to get screened by sharing this brochure: http://bit.ly/2HrNB4h | 1,3 |
| #CancerCare Providers: Explain how #ColorectalCancer screening can prevent #cancer by detecting polyps that can be easily removed. Learn how to explain the benefits of screening: http://bit.ly/2FpPU7V | Providers, explain how colorectal cancer screening can prevent cancer through the detection and removal of precancerous polyps. This course can help you explain the benefits of screening to your patients: http://bit.ly/2FpPU7V | 1 |
| Should you be screened for #ColorectalCancer? Check out this fact sheet and talk to your doctor: http://bit.ly/2FIERhN | Screening for colorectal cancer can raise a lot of questions. This fact sheet from CDC can help you start a conversation with your doctor: http://bit.ly/2FIERhN | 1 |
| Is #ColorectalCancer really that common? Do I need to get tested if I have no family history? This PSA answers these questions and more: http://bit.ly/3dK2nVo @CDCgov | Many people think that colorectal cancer isn't that common or that they don't need to get tested if they don't have symptoms. Get the facts from this Screen for Life PSA: http://bit.ly/3dK2nVo | 1 |
| "Early detection can save your life." Joan Lunden explains why #ColorectalCancer screening is so important: http://bit.ly/2vjsWNC | "Treatment is most effective when cancer is found in its early stages." Journalist and cancer survivor Joan Lunden explains why it's so important to get screened: http://bit.ly/2vjsWNC | 1,3 |
| "Fortunately, my cancer was caught early, but I never would have found it early if I hadn't been screened," says Robert. Learn more: http://bit.ly/2VHYwwp | "If I hadn't been screened, I wouldn't have been able to see my son go off to college, or enjoy this next chapter of my life with my wife and family." Learn more about Robert's story about getting screened for colorectal cancer: http://bit.ly/2VHYwwp | 1,3 |
| #ColorectalCancer is the second most common #cancer among Asian Americans. Learn how to address this | Colorectal cancer is the second most common cancer among Asian Americans. Learn more on how to address this disparity and promote colorectal screening in this demographic: https://bit.ly/3rEcGHz | 1,3 |

disparity and promote screening:
<https://bit.ly/3rEcgHz>

SAMPLE TWEETS AND FACEBOOK POSTS CONT.

| Tweets | Facebook Posts | Message Category |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| Not sure which #ColorectalCancer test is right for you? Check out this brochure and talk to your doctor: http://bit.ly/2Tlb2u8 | Thinking about screened for colorectal cancer, but not sure which test is right for you? This helpful booklet covers some of the most common tests: http://bit.ly/2Tlb2u8 | 1,2 |
| Talking with your doctor about #ColorectalCancer screening may seem overwhelming. This resource can help guide your conversation: http://bit.ly/2ChovyH | Preparation is key when it comes to colorectal cancer screening. This set of questions can help you start the conversation with your doctor and decide which screening test is right for you: http://bit.ly/2ChovyH | 1 |
| Don't take chances with #ColorectalCancer! Get informed about risk factors and symptoms: http://bit.ly/2D2g27i #ScreenforLife | Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month is a great opportunity to brush up on your knowledge of risk factors and symptoms of colorectal cancer. Get informed: http://bit.ly/2D2g27i | 1 |
| These testimonies are a reminder that getting screened for #ColorectalCancer could save your life: http://bit.ly/2ADHo24 | Getting screened for colorectal cancer could save your life! Learn from others who have been screened: http://bit.ly/2ADHo24 | 1,3 |
| How can you get #ColorectalCancer screening rates up in your community? Start by learning how your state measures up: http://bit.ly/2Rko5C5 #8oinEveryCommunity | We could save an estimated 203,000 lives by 2030 if 80% of adults were screened as recommended for colorectal cancer. How does your state measure up? http://bit.ly/2Rko5C5 | 1,3 |
| #CancerCare Physicians: Your recommendation matters when it comes to getting patients screened for #ColorectalCancer. Learn how to tailor your recommendations for patients: http://bit.ly/2FpPU7V | How can physicians maximize the benefits of colorectal cancer screening for their patients? This CDC-sponsored continuing education activity has practical advice for implementing screening in your practice: http://bit.ly/2FpPU7V | 1 |
| Risk factors for #ColorectalCancer include inflammatory bowel disease, family history, and certain genetic syndromes: http://bit.ly/2H1KuCu | You may be at risk for colorectal cancer if you have a personal history of polyps, inflammatory bowel disease, certain genetic syndromes, or a family history of colorectal cancer. Read more and talk to your doctor about getting screened: http://bit.ly/2H1KuCu | 1 |
| Actress Meryl Streep says, "There is so much in life we can't control. But here's something we can: colorectal cancer." http://bit.ly/2oKp5ov | Screening can prevent colorectal cancer, or detect it early, by finding polyps so that they can be removed before they turn into cancer. In this PSA, Meryl Streep talks about getting screened: http://bit.ly/2oKp5ov | 1,3 |
| 1 in 2 Hispanic middle-aged adults is not getting #colorectalcancer tested as | 1 in 2 Hispanic adults between 50 and 75 years old is not getting screened for colorectal cancer as | 1,3 |

| | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| recommended. Learn more about this disparity and how to prevent it: https://bit.ly/2Nc8SVx | recommended. Learn more about this group's unique barriers to screening and how to close this disparity gap: https://bit.ly/2Nc8SVx | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|

SAMPLE TWEETS AND FACEBOOK POSTS FOR COVID-19

| Tweets | Facebook Posts | Message Category |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| #CancerCare Providers: Reassure your patients about the importance of resuming #colorectal cancer screening during #COVID19: https://bit.ly/30G6N13 | Healthcare Providers: Despite the challenges from COVID-19, reassure your patients on the importance of resuming colorectal cancer screening, even during the pandemic: https://bit.ly/30G6N13 | 1 |
| #CancerCare Providers: During #COVID19, prioritize those most at-risk for #colorectal cancer complications from delayed care: http://bit.ly/3uqq3ns | Healthcare Providers: During the COVID-19 pandemic, prioritize those most at-risk for colorectal cancer complications from delayed care and those without access to telehealth services: http://bit.ly/3uqq3ns | 1 |
| For those at average risk for #COVID19, there are several safe options for at-home #colorectal cancer testing: http://bit.ly/3r1A3fA | For those at average or increased risk for COVID-19, there are several safe options for at-home colorectal cancer testing: http://bit.ly/3r1A3fA | 2 |
| #CancerCare Providers: Promote at-home #colorectal cancer testing, such as stool-based tests, during #COVID19: http://bit.ly/3jelvKw | Healthcare Providers: Promote at-home testing for colorectal cancer, such as stool-based tests, during the COVID-19 pandemic: http://bit.ly/3jelvKw | 2 |
| #CancerCare Providers: #Colorectal cancer disparities are already evident and will increase due to #COVID19. Don't let your patients fall behind: http://bit.ly/36DWDrK | Healthcare Providers: Colorectal cancer disparities are already evident and will increase due to COVID-19. Don't let your patients fall behind: http://bit.ly/36DWDrK | 1 |
| There were 1.5 million missed colonoscopies from March to June 2020. Read about the importance of continued #colorectal cancer screenings during #COVID19: https://bit.ly/32YKFHc | Due COVID-19, there were 1.5 million missed colonoscopies from March-June 2020. Read about the importance of continued colorectal cancer screening during the pandemic: https://bit.ly/32YKFHc | 1 |
| #Cancer patients and survivors, including #colorectal cancer survivors, may be at higher risk for illness if they get #COVID19. Lower your risk of infection by following @CDCgov guidance: http://bit.ly/2JPXH3p | Cancer patients and survivors, including colorectal cancer survivors, may be at a higher risk for illness if they get COVID-19. Lower your risk of infection by following this CDC guidance: http://bit.ly/2JPXH3p | 1,3 |

SAMPLE LINKEDIN POSTS

| LinkedIn Message | Message Category |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| Healthcare Providers: March is a great time to brush up on best practices for colorectal cancer screening. These courses from CDC provide continuing education credits and are intended for primary care providers or other clinicians who perform colonoscopies: http://bit.ly/2Q9VrX2 | 1 |
| Colorectal cancer is on the rise in younger adults. These resources from the Colorectal Cancer Alliance can help providers educate their patients on the risks: http://bit.ly/2DoZVa6 | 1,3 |
| Healthcare Providers: Check out this resource from the National Cancer Institute to learn about the latest evidence-based information about colorectal cancer screening: http://bit.ly/3uqlp7Q | 1 |
| Check out this factsheet from the American Cancer Society about colorectal cancer and its risk factors, prevention, and treatment: https://bit.ly/3pM78km | 1 |
| Healthcare Providers: Colorectal cancer screening can save lives, but only if individuals get tested. During the COVID-19 pandemic, utilize telehealth services and promote at-home testing to reach populations at-risk for both COVID-19 and colorectal cancer: http://bit.ly/36DWDrK | 1, 2 |
| Healthcare Providers: As your practice returns to providing in-person colorectal cancer screening, follow these guidelines from the CDC to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission and ensure safe screening: http://bit.ly/33VpR3U | 1 |
| Healthcare Providers: Despite the challenges we face during the COVID-19 pandemic, prevention of colorectal cancer remains a public health priority. Learn more from the American Cancer Society on providing safe opportunities to screen for colorectal cancers during the pandemic: https://bit.ly/2LflNdz | 1,2 |



Remember that other suggestions on social media strategies, links to images and graphics, analytic tools, and a glossary of social media terms can be found on the GW Cancer Center's Social Media Guide at <http://bit.ly/GWCCSMTKs>

ADDITIONAL TOOLS AND RESOURCES

| Tool | Description |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| American Cancer Society- Resuming Cancer Screening During COVID-19 | This report summarize the current situation with COVID-19 and colorectal cancer, and provides guidance on how to deliver cancer screenings safely and effectively during the pandemic. |
| Clinician’s Reference: Stool-Based Tests for Colorectal Cancer Screening | This resource introduces clinicians to the value of stool-based testing for colorectal cancer and explains the different types available. |
| Colorectal Cancer: Early Detection, Diagnosis, and Staging | Find out how colorectal cancer is tested for, diagnosed, and staged with this webpage from the American Cancer Society. |
| Colon Cancer Videos | The videos in this collection explain colon cancer risk factors, screening tests, treatments, and personal stories from survivors. |
| Colorectal Cancer Screening Best Practices: A Handbook for Hospitals and Health Systems | This source provides advice on the design and delivery of effective colorectal cancer screening interventions to strengthen overall efforts. |
| Colorectal Cancer Screening Profiles | The documents included in this resource show colorectal screening rates in the United States/ Puerto Rico by race, ethnicity, age, insurance status, sex, and more. |
| Colorectal Cancer Screening: What to Expect | Learn about three screening methods that can reduce the chance of death from colorectal cancer: colonoscopy, sigmoidoscopy, and home stool test. |
| Comprehensive Cancer Control Plan Tip Sheet: Colorectal Cancer | This source from the American Cancer Society provides guidance on updating colorectal cancer screening in comprehensive cancer control plans, including information on engaging key partners, identifying data sources to measure efforts, and discussion questions surrounding colorectal cancer and screening. |
| National Colorectal Cancer Roundtable: Screening During COVID-19 | This resource is an action-oriented playbook to be used throughout the COVID-19 pandemic to advocate for colorectal cancer screening efforts. |
| Tested Messages to Reach the Unscreened-Hispanics/Latinos and Colorectal Cancer | This companion guide reviews what we know from market research about unscreened Hispanics/ Latinos and introduces and explains new tested messages. |
| What Can LGBT Communities Do to Advance Colorectal Cancer Screening? | Learn four things you can do to support reaching colorectal cancer screening rates of 80% and higher in LGBT communities. |
| 2019 Colorectal Cancer Screening Messaging Guidebook | This guidebook shares the findings and recommendations from recent research to educate and mobilize those not being screened for colorectal cancer. |

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