

# NEWS RELEASE

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For immediate release

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## March is Colon Cancer Awareness Month

March is Colon Cancer Awareness Month and the Nebraska Colon Cancer Screening Program and Panhandle Public Health District are working together to improve colon cancer screening rates in Nebraska by offering free fecal occult blood test (FOBT) kits to Panhandle residents.

Colon cancer develops with few, if any symptoms at first. If symptoms are present they may include, blood in the stool, a change in bowel habits, general unexplained stomach discomfort, frequent gas, pains, or indigestion, unexplained weight loss, and chronic fatigue.

“Because people often don’t have any symptoms in the early stages of colon cancer, having regular screening tests beginning at age 50 is the most effective way to reduce your risk of colon cancer,” said Becky Corman, RN for PPHD.

“Screening tests find colon cancer early, when treatment works best and the chance for a full recovery is very high.”

An FOBT kit is a simple screening test that detects hidden blood in the stool. It can be completed in the privacy of your own home and mailed to a laboratory. The results are sent to you and your doctor. If the FOBT kit detects hidden blood in the stool a follow-up colonoscopy will be recommended. PPHD can assist with planning follow-up care as needed.

Corman said as soon as you turn 50, you should talk to your medical provider about colon cancer and get screened at regular intervals.

“You may need to be tested earlier or more often than other people if you or a close relative have had colorectal polyps or colorectal cancer, or if you have inflammatory bowel disease,” she added.

Panhandle residents age 50 or older can contact PPHD today at 1-855-227-2217 for a free FOBT kit.

For more information visit [www.pphd.org](http://www.pphd.org). Panhandle Public Health District is working together to improve the health, safety and quality of life for all who live, learn, work and play in the Panhandle. Our vision is that we are a healthier and safer Panhandle Community.