

NEWS RELEASE

February 28, 2011

For immediate release

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Colorectal cancer is the second leading cause of cancer-related deaths in the United States, second only to lung cancer. Nebraska ranks among the top in the nation for its high incidence and death rate from colorectal cancer. 910 Nebraskans die every year from this cancer.

However, colorectal cancer screening saves lives – an estimated 60% of colorectal cancer deaths could be prevented if men and women age 50 and older were screened routinely. Panhandle Public Health District and Scotts Bluff County Health Department are working with partners in a regional cancer coalition to make sure more individuals are screened by offering a FREE fecal occult blood testing kit. Free kits will be available at health fairs listed below.

“The risk of developing colorectal cancer increases with advancing age,” PPHD Nurse Kelly Dean said. “More than 90% of cases occur in people age 50 or older.”

Dean said as soon as you turn 50, you should 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. Other risk factors and symptoms are listed [\[at left/right/below\]](#).

Dean said any Panhandle resident over 50 or those with concerns regarding colorectal cancer risk factors or symptoms can call 855-227-2217 for a free FOBT kit. The kit is simple and can be completed in the privacy of your own home. The user will mail the kit into a laboratory and results will be mailed to the participant and their doctor. We will assist those with planning follow-up care if needed.

For additional information about colorectal cancer or free FOBT test kits, visit www.pphd.org. The purpose of the Panhandle Public Health District is to educate the region it serves about the prevention of epidemics, spread of contagious diseases, injury, illness and disability. The district is charged with promoting and encouraging healthy behaviors. They promote the quality and accessibility of health services and protection against environmental hazards. Through education, protection and promotion of these issues, the Panhandle Public Health District believes the quality of life of the residents they serve can be greatly improved.

Possible sidebars:

Fair	Location	Date	Time
Box Butte County	Alliance High School Gym	March 19	10 a.m. – 5 p.m.
Gordon	Gordon-Rushville High School	March 26	8 a.m. – 2 p.m.
Bridgeport 9 News	Prairie Winds Community Center	April 2	6 a.m. – noon
Crawford	Legend Buttes Health Services	TBD	TBD
Sidney Memorial Health Center	Cheyenne County Community Center	April 16	8 a.m. – noon
Kimball Health Fair	Kimball Health Services	May 18	7 – 11:30 a.m.

Possible symptoms of colon cancer

- Blood in or on the stool
- A change in bowel habits
- General, unexplained stomach discomfort
- Frequent gas pains or indigestion
- Unexplained weight loss
- Chronic fatigue

Risk factors

- Eating a low-fiber, high-fat diet
- Being overweight
- Smoking
- An inactive lifestyle
- Certain hereditary conditions, such as the tendency to have many colon polyps
- A family history of colon cancer, especially parents or siblings