



1020 Washington St. N, Twin Falls, Idaho
208-737-5900 www.phd5.idaho.gov

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PRESS RELEASE – For Immediate Release

Contact: Susie Beem, Comprehensive Cancer Program Coordinator, 737-5946

March is Colon Cancer Awareness Month

TWIN FALLS-March 2011 marks the continued observance of National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month. The goal of this national observance is to generate widespread awareness about colorectal cancer and to encourage people to learn more about prevention of the disease through regular screening and a healthy lifestyle. Colorectal cancer is the second-leading cause of cancer-related death in Idaho, with only lung cancer taking the lives of more men and women. From 2004-2008, 2,955 Idahoans were diagnosed with colorectal cancer, and there were 1,035 deaths from colorectal cancer.

The primary risk factor for colon cancer is increasing age. Ninety percent of cases are found in persons over the age of 50. Other risk factors include family history of colorectal cancer or colorectal polyps; a personal history of colon cancer, colon polyps, or inflammatory bowel disease; a diet high in animal fats or low in fiber; sedentary lifestyle; overweight and obesity; smoking; heavy alcohol use; and women with diabetes.

It is estimated that 75 percent of those with colon cancer have no family history of the disease. If you do have a family history, you are at an increased risk for colorectal cancer, and screening should begin at an earlier age and be done more often.

Regular screening can often find colorectal cancer early, when it is most likely to be curable. In many cases, screening can also prevent colorectal cancer altogether.

For more information about colon cancer or about the local colon cancer advisory board, call Susie Beem at 737-5946.

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