



## Nearly One in Three Men and Women Age 50 and Over Have Not Been Screened for Colon Cancer; One in Four Say their Healthcare Provider Didn't Recommend Screening

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**Poll respondents also report "too busy" and "fear" as reasons they haven't been screened, but most claim they would be screened if a blood test were available**

WASHINGTON, June 16, 2011 /PRNewswire via COMTEX/ --

Results from a nationwide research poll released today by the Colon Cancer Alliance and Quest Diagnostics (NYSE: DGX) show that 31 percent of men and women age 50 years and over have never been screened for colon cancer by standard screening methods such as a colonoscopy, fecal occult blood tests (FOBT) and fecal immunochemical tests (FIT). The poll also shows that among men and women age 50 and older who have not been screened for colon cancer, more than 1 in 4 (28 percent) said their healthcare provider, such as a doctor or nurse, did not recommend they be screened.

Among those age 50 and older who have not been screened for colon cancer, the top reasons they were not screened were (respondents were asked to select options that applied):

- 28 percent -- healthcare provider, such a doctor or nurse, didn't recommend I get screened
- 18 percent -- too busy or time constraints
- 16 percent -- fear
- 16 percent -- didn't know I needed to be screened
- 15 percent -- can't afford the health insurance co-payment
- 10 percent -- no insurance
- 9 percent -- modesty or embarrassment

American Cancer Society guidelines recommend that men and women of average risk for developing colon cancer begin screening at age 50 by colonoscopy or other tests. The Colon Cancer Alliance and Quest Diagnostics' survey supports earlier research that a large percentage of men and women age 50 and older are not adhering to the screening guidelines. In addition, among the 69 percent who reported in the survey that they have been screened for colon cancer, 87 percent said they have been screened with a colonoscopy.

"Our survey suggests that while more men and women of screening age are being tested than in the past, a significant screening gap remains," said Andrew Spiegel, CEO of the Colon Cancer Alliance. "Health care professionals have a tremendous opportunity to educate patients about screening options."

DNA blood tests for aiding the detection of colon cancer have recently been introduced in the U.S., although they have yet to be reviewed for inclusion in medical guidelines. When respondents were polled on their attitudes about a blood test, 78 percent said they were likely to take a blood test for colon cancer screening compared to 18 percent who said they were unlikely to take a blood test and 4 percent who didn't know. Three out of four people (75 percent) said they were more likely to get screened more frequently for colon cancer if a blood test were available.

"With technological advances, physicians and patients have a range of options to choose from for colon cancer screening, from colonoscopy to FITs. But as options increase, so does the risk that patients will be confused about how, when and under which circumstances to be screened," said Dr. Jon R. Cohen, senior vice president and chief medical officer, Quest Diagnostics. "It is vital that physicians engage their patients in a dialogue about their options and help them resolve the fears or misinformation that prevents testing."

When those who said they had never been screened due to fear were asked the specific source of their fear, the number one reason cited (61 percent) was having to undergo unpleasant bowel preparation (including laxatives and fasting). Some tests, most notably a colonoscopy, involve bowel preparation, but others, such as FITs, do not. Other reasons were: afraid of test results (36 percent), side effects, such as pain discomfort and gas (35 percent), afraid of medical tests (28 percent) and fear of being sedated by anesthesia (17 percent).

Colon cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death in the United States, but is often treatable when caught in early stages. Sixty percent of colon cancer deaths could be prevented if people were screened as indicated by guidelines, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

### Polling Methodology

The Colon Cancer Alliance and Quest Diagnostics engaged national survey firm ORC International, an infoGroup company, to conduct a national probability phone study among 1,304 men and women 50 years of age and over to gauge their level of awareness about colon cancer screening, adherence to American Cancer Society guidelines and barriers to screening. A total of 614 men and 690 women were surveyed in May 2011. The survey was funded through an educational grant from Quest Diagnostics.

### Colon Cancer Alliance

The Colon Cancer Alliance is the oldest and largest national patient advocacy organization dedicated to ending the suffering caused by colorectal cancer. In order to increase rates of screening and survivorship, the Colon Cancer Alliance provides patient support, public education, supports research and conducts advocacy work across the United States. Visit [www.CCAlliance.org](http://www.CCAlliance.org).

### About Quest Diagnostics

Quest Diagnostics is the world's leading provider of diagnostic testing, information and services that patients and doctors need to make better healthcare decisions. The company offers the broadest access to diagnostic testing services through its network of laboratories and patient service centers, and provides interpretive consultation through its extensive medical and scientific staff. Quest Diagnostics is a pioneer in developing innovative new diagnostic tests and advanced healthcare information technology solutions that help improve patient care.

Quest Diagnostics is a leader in colon cancer testing. The company offers the ColoVantage(TM) test, the first blood-plasma DNA test in the U.S. for aiding in the detection of colon cancer, based on the Septin9 DNA biomarker owned by Epigenomics AG. The company also offers the Insure® FIT test as well as several genetic tests, including EGFR pathway analysis, for aiding in therapy selection for colon cancer.

Additional company information is available at [QuestDiagnostics.com](http://QuestDiagnostics.com). Follow us at [Facebook.com/QuestDiagnostics](https://Facebook.com/QuestDiagnostics) and [Twitter.com/QuestDX](https://Twitter.com/QuestDX).

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