

ST. NICHOLAS HOSPITAL HEALTHSOURCE

Fight Cancer through Screening

Overall, the best defense in the war against cancer is early detection. Doctors and scientists have studied patterns of cancer in the population to learn which people are more likely to get certain types of cancer and what factors might contribute to developing cancer. Based on their findings, they developed parameters for cancer screening.

The parameters provide your doctor timeframes in which to recommend cancer screenings for you and members of your family. This, however, does not mean he or she thinks you have cancer, but that your age, sex, family background, or a variety of other outside factors may put you at risk for developing the disease.

Cancer screening help determine if the disease is present in its earliest stages, giving you the best possible chance for recovery. The following screening guidelines are adapted from American Cancer Society recommendations:

Colorectal Cancer: Men and women age 50 and over should have a sigmoidoscopy every five years or a colonoscopy every 10 years, and a Fecal occult Blood test (testing stool for blood) at the age of 40.

Prostate/Rectal Cancer: Men over age 50 should have a digital rectal exam every year. Men with high risk factors should be tested after age 40. In addition, patients should discuss the benefits of a Prostate Specific Antigen (PSA) test, with their physicians.

Cervical Cancer: All women over the age of 18 should have an annual Pap test. In addition, a pelvic examination should be done annually to screen for cervical, endometrial, vaginal, and vulva cancers.

Breast Cancer: All women 18 and over should do a monthly breast exam and have a breast exam done by a physician during an annual physical. Women 40 and over should have a yearly mammogram.

Skin Cancer: Men and women are encouraged to do a monthly skin exam to look for changes in the skin.

Remember, cancer screening offers the best chance to find – and treat – cancer before symptoms develop. If you fit into one of the above categories, make sure that you schedule the appropriate cancer screenings for yourself.



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