

Cancer Prevention and Screening

Background Information/Rationale for Focus

It has been estimated that over 2,380,000 workers in Canada will be diagnosed with cancer within the next 30 years.¹ Based on current incidence rates, 40 per cent of Canadian women and almost 45 per cent of men will develop cancer during their lifetime.² According to the Canadian Cancer Society, cancer is the leading cause of premature death in Canada. An estimated 171,000 new cases of cancer and 75,300 deaths will occur in Canada in 2009.² Based on current mortality rates, 24 per cent of women and 29 per cent men, or 1 in 4 Canadians, will die from cancer.² Overall 30 – 35 per cent of cancers can be prevented by eating well, staying active and being a healthy weight.³



Breast Cancer

Breast cancer is the most commonly diagnosed female cancer and is the second leading cause of cancer death in women. In 2009, it is estimated that 8,700 women in Ontario will be diagnosed with breast cancer and that 2,100 women will die from the disease.² Early detection of breast cancer by regular screening has been shown to reduce deaths by 30 per cent.⁴ Because increasing age is a known risk for breast cancer, 8 out of 10 breast cancers are in women aged 50 and over. A comprehensive screening program for women age 50 to 69, such as the Ontario Breast Screening Program (OBSP), provides mammography and a clinical breast examination at some sites. Women may self refer. The goal of OBSP is to screen 70 per cent of the women in Ontario age 50-69 by 2010 and 90 per cent by 2020.⁴ In Waterloo Region in 2007-2008 only 41 per cent of eligible women were screened through OBSP.⁵

Cervical Cancer

Cervical cancer is the second most common cancer in women under 50 years of age. Up to 90 per cent of cervical cancers are preventable through regular screening. In 2009 Ontario estimates there will be 500 new cases and 140 deaths due to cervical cancer.² Regular Pap Tests can prevent up to 90 per cent of cervical cancer cases by detecting cervical cell changes early before the cells become cancerous. Human Papillomavirus (HPV) is a common family of viruses that is seen primarily as responsible for cervical cancer. A HPV vaccine was approved by Health Canada in July 2006 for use among females age 9 to 26 for the prevention of cervical cancer. In 2007, provincial funding was approved for Grade 8 girls to be immunized through the voluntary school vaccination program. Women who are, or have ever been sexually active should continue having regular Pap Tests until at least the age of 70.

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Colorectal Cancer

Colorectal cancer is the second most common cause of cancer death for both men and women. It is estimated that in 2009 in Ontario, that 4,400 men and 3,700 women will be diagnosed with colorectal cancer.² In 2009, it is estimated that 1,800 men and 1,250 women will die from colorectal cancer.² Approximately 93 per cent of the men and women who are diagnosed with colorectal cancer are over the age of 50.⁶ Detecting colorectal cancer early through regular screening has shown a 90 per cent chance of curing the cancer. ColonCancerCheck is an organized province wide colorectal cancer screening program that targets men and women aged 50 – 74 years of age to get screened for colorectal cancer. Fecal Occult Blood Test (FOBT) and Colonoscopy are the screening methods used in the program. In Ontario, only 24 per cent of men and women ages 50-74 completed a FOBT in the last two years.⁵

For breast, cervical and colorectal cancers, regular screening can save lives.

Goals For The Workplace To Strive For

1. To promote awareness of risks for breast and cervical and colorectal cancer.
2. To educate employees about screening strategies to reduce incidences or early detections of breast, cervical and colorectal cancer.
3. To promote awareness of lifestyle factors that can help reduce the risk of developing cancer.
4. To provide a supportive environment and policy's to get employees screened for breast, cervical and colorectal cancers.

Getting Started – Utilizing a Variety of Health Promotion Strategies

Awareness Raising

- Utilize bulletin boards and displays featuring information about breast, cervical and colorectal cancer risks and screening programs
- Dedicate an accessible area to display pamphlets, resources or videos
- Include short articles in an internal newsletter, intranet website or staff emails (check websites and local newspaper for relevant articles)
- Conduct a Cancer Quiz contest, provide Cancer Screening Phone Messages for staff on hold or play the Cancer Prevention Jeopardy Game at team meetings
- Refer to the Cancer Prevention and Screening in the workplace Toolkit

Skill Building

- Offer presentations/ workshops based on employee interest through “lunch and learn” sessions on reducing known and possible cancer risks and following breast, cervical and colorectal screening guidelines
- Coordinate a Breast Screening Staff Program similar to Grand River Hospital's Ontario Breast Screening Staff Program (see link under internet resources)

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Creating Supportive Environments and Policy

- Flexible work hours to accommodate medical appointments; or develop a policy that gives staff time off to go to screening appointments
- Provide employees and management with the opportunity to attend training, workshops or courses relating to cancer prevention and screening
- Cafeteria or vending machines stocked with healthy food choices
- Space for exercise group at lunch or start a walking group
- Smoking cessation programs – Educate employees about risk factors



Telephone consultation is available through **Project Health: 519-883-2287**

Region of Waterloo Public Health Resources

Project Health has a number of resources available for planning, implementing and evaluating your workplace wellness activities. As well, we have a number of links to external resources that you may find helpful. Please see www.projecthealth.ca for further resources on this topics area.

Also, the Public Health Resource Centre has a number of displays, educational kits, DVDs, posters, books, and pamphlets relevant to workplace health. Search for resources using the online catalogue. Or simply contact Resource Centre staff with your topic and they will suggest resources for you. Note that resources may be booked in advance.

For more information, click [here](#) (link to:

<http://chd.region.waterloo.on.ca/web/health.nsf/DocID/1FB38293EBA4935785256B120060265E?OpenDocument>)

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References

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- 2 Canadian Cancer Society. (2009). *Canadian cancer statistics, 2009*. Toronto: Author.
- 3 Cancer Research Fund and American Institute for Cancer Research. (1997). *Food, nutrition, physical activity and the prevention of cancer: A global perspective*. London, UK: Author.
- 4 Cancer Care Ontario. (2007). *Ontario breast screening program background*. Retrieved from <http://www.cancercare.on.ca/common/pages/UserFile.aspx?fileId=13032>
- 5 Cancer Care Ontario. (2009). Cancer system quality index. Retrieved from <http://csqi.cancercare.on.ca/>
- 6 Canadian Cancer Society. (2008). *Insight on colorectal cancer*. Toronto: Cancer Care.



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