



Early Cancer Detection: Tests Offered by Saskatchewan Health

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Early detection of cancer is the key to early treatment and better health outcomes. Saskatchewan Health offers several screening tests to those that are most at risk for certain types of cancers.

Colorectal Cancer

Colorectal Cancer, also known as bowel or colon cancer, is a leading cause of death due to cancer in Saskatchewan and often develops without symptoms. The good news is that colorectal cancer is 90% preventable when detected early. A screening test for colorectal cancer is offered to residents of Saskatchewan between the ages of 50 and 74 who have not been diagnosed with colorectal cancer in the past 5 years. This test can be done in the comfort of your own home.

If you qualify for the screening program you will receive a "FIT" test in the mail. The test includes instructions on how to gather a very tiny stool sample. You then send the sample to the lab in a postage paid envelope or drop off at a lab in the city. The test results will be sent to your health care provider.

Breast Cancer Screening

The Saskatchewan Cancer Agency's Screening Program for Breast Cancer (SPBC) provides screening mammograms to Saskatchewan women between 50 and 69 years of age. Women over 50 should have a mammogram every 2 years and women with a family history of breast cancer should have a mammogram every year. The SPBC will inform women, by mail, when they are due for a mammogram. Your provider can also arrange for your mammogram.

Cervical Cancer Screening

The cervix is a narrow neck-like passage forming the lower end of the uterus in women. Most cervical cancers are caused by the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV), a very common sexually transmitted disease. People may not know they are infected with HPV so it is easy it transmit to partners. The HPV virus may cause changes in the cervical cells which may then cause cancer.

The Prevention Program for Cervical Cancer (PPCC), a screening program of the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency, informs women when they are due for a Pap test, notifies women of their Pap test results, and works with care providers to ensure appropriate follow-up of abnormal Pap test results.

Women should have their first Pap test at age 21 or three years after becoming sexually active, whichever occurs later. Thereafter, Pap tests are recommended every two years. After three consecutive normal results, best practice suggests that women continue having a Pap test every three years until they turn 69. Women who have had a subtotal hysterectomy, where your cervix is still present, will continue to need Pap tests. Based on their providers' recommendations, women with certain risk factors may need to have more frequent Pap tests.

Please speak to your physician or nurse practitioner for more information on Saskatchewan Cancer Prevention Programs or contact the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency by phone at 639-625-2010 or online at <http://www.saskcancer.ca/>. 

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