



For Immediate Release

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MARCH IS COLORECTAL CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

(Hartford, Conn. March 4, 2013) - Oncologists at the Saint Francis/Mount Sinai Regional Cancer Center encourage adults to take steps to detect colorectal cancer early, when it is in its most treatable stages.

Colorectal cancer is cancer of the colon or rectum. It's as common in women as it is in men. This year, over 142,000 people will be diagnosed with colorectal cancer and an estimated 50,830 will die of the disease.

Generally, men and women should begin testing for colorectal cancer at:

- *age 40*, if there is a family history of the disease
- *at age 50*, otherwise

There are three types of screening tests available today:

- *colonoscopy*, in which a physician examines the entire length of the colon and rectum through a viewing scope
- *flexible sigmoidoscopy*, which employs a shorter viewing instrument to examine the lower one-third of the colon
- *virtual colonoscopy*, which utilizes digital imaging technology to produce a noninvasive computerized view of the colon and rectum

Frequency for repeating these tests varies depending on personal and family history, but is typically every 5-10 years for standard risk patients* .

Saint Francis/Mount Sinai oncologists say you can reduce your chances of developing colorectal cancer by:

- being physically active
- maintaining a healthy weight
- not smoking
- limiting the consumption of alcohol
- eating fruits, vegetables, and whole grains
- reducing the amount of red meat in your diet

Symptoms of colorectal cancer may include:

- change in bowel habits
- stools that are more narrow than usual
- bloating or fullness in the abdomen, cramps

- diarrhea, constipation, or a feeling in the rectum that the bowel movement isn't quite complete
- weight loss for no apparent reason
- being tired all of the time
- vomiting

* Always consult with your physician for specific advice.

About Saint Francis Care

Saint Francis *Care* is an integrated healthcare delivery system established by Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center, an anchor institution in north central Connecticut since 1897. Licensed for 617 beds and 65 bassinets, it is a major teaching hospital and the largest Catholic hospital in New England. Other major entities of Saint Francis *Care* include The Mount Sinai Rehabilitation Hospital, the Connecticut Joint Replacement Institute, the Hoffman Heart and Vascular Institute of Connecticut, the Saint Francis/Mount Sinai Regional Cancer Center, the Joyce D. and Andrew J. Mandell Center for Comprehensive Multiple Sclerosis Care and Neuroscience Research, and Saint Francis Health*Care* Partners. Its services are supported by a network of five major Access Centers and eight additional medical office centers sited throughout the region. For more information, visit www.stfranciscare.com.