

Cancer Doesn't Stop for COVID-19

(Thunder Bay, ON – May 7, 2021) While COVID-19 is dominating our news headlines, cancer continues to impact the health of too many individuals across Northwestern Ontario. And in a time when we are all doing our best to stay healthy, it's important to stay up to date with your screening.

That's why Prevention and Screening Clinical Services at Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre (TBRHSC) has launched a campaign called 'Cancer Doesn't Stop for COVID-19' to encourage individuals to get screened for breast, cervical, and colon cancer, even during the pandemic.

"Cancer doesn't stop for COVID-19," says Tarja Heiskanen, Manager of Screening and Assessment Services at TBRHSC. "We can't underestimate the importance of cancer screening. Routine screening can find certain types of cancer earlier, before you have any symptoms. Detecting cancer early means that there is an even better chance of treating it successfully. As an example, colon cancer is 90% curable if found at an early stage."

There are three organized cancer screening programs in Ontario:

Breast cancer screening:

- Women between the ages of 50 and 74 years should complete a breast cancer screening mammogram every two years.

Cervical cancer screening:

- Anyone with a cervix aged 21 to 69, who has ever been sexually active, should complete a Pap test every three years.

Colon cancer screening:

- Anyone aged 50 to 74 with no first-degree family history of colon cancer should complete a fecal immunochemical test (FIT) every two years.

All three programs can be accessed on TBRHSC's Screen for Life Coach, which is currently travelling throughout the Northwest region. Those who are eligible for screening do not require a referral from a health care provider to access services on the Coach.

"Although it is not uncommon for individuals to postpone appointments for mammograms, pap smears, and colon cancer screenings for various reasons, we recommend that everyone stays up-to-date with their cancer screening," says Dr. Rhonda Crocker Ellacott, President and CEO of TBRHSC and CEO of Thunder Bay Regional Health Research Institute. "It's understandable that many people are afraid to attend medical appointments during the pandemic because they do not want to be exposed to COVID-19, but you can be confident that when you are visiting these health care settings, including the Screen for Life Coach, they are following COVID-19 guidelines and you will be safe."

There is no reason to wait - put routine cancer screening back on your to-do list. If you are eligible and due or overdue for breast, cervical, or colon cancer screening tests, contact your health care provider or the Screen for Life Coach at (807) 684-7777 to book your appointment.

MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

To see the complete Screen for Life Coach travel season schedule, visit www.tbrhsc.net/screenforlife.

To learn more about cancer screening, visit www.tbrhsc.net/cancerscreening.

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Healthy Together

Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre, a 375-bed academic specialized acute care facility, is a national leader in Patient and Family Centred Care. As the only tertiary care provider in Northwestern Ontario, we provide comprehensive services to a population of over 250,000 residents in a region the size of France.

Effectively addressing the health care needs of patients and families has earned us both Innovation Awards and Leading Practice Designations.

As an academic health sciences centre, we teach the next generation of health care providers and advance medical research. Patients benefit from interprofessional teams of dedicated health care providers and access to leading-edge medical technology and clinical trials.