

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Wipe out Colon Cancer: 50 percent of eligible people are due for screening

(Thunder Bay, ON – March 1, 2023) Many people in Northwestern Ontario are still not completing the recommended screening test to check for colon cancer. Colon Cancer Awareness Month launches today, and Dr. Jordan Green, Regional Colorectal Screening and GI Endoscopy Lead for Ontario Health — Cancer Care Ontario at Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre, urges people in our region to get screened for colon cancer by completing a simple, take-home kit.

The fecal immunochemical test (FIT) is a safe and easy-to-complete cancer screening test that checks a person's stool (poop) for tiny drops of blood, which can be an early sign of colon cancer. If you are ages 50-74 and have no first-degree family history of colon cancer, you should complete a FIT every two years. The FIT is unique when compared to other medical tests. There is no appointment needed to complete the test, since you do this at home. It only takes a few minutes to complete and requires little preparation, so it is easy to fit into your busy schedule.

“The FIT is the best way for average risk people to screen for colon cancer. I strongly encourage people to get a FIT — it is easy, can be done at home, and could save their life,” says Dr. Green. “Many of the FIT positive patients that come for follow up testing end up having large polyps - abnormal growths that form on the lining of the colon. We are able to remove these using an endoscope and actually prevent cancer from forming. A simple test like the FIT can literally save your life.”

FIT is simple and convenient, yet our region has a low number of people screening. The low numbers is a call to action for health care providers to make sure all eligible adults are aware of FIT and have access to screening.

“When colon cancer is detected early, the chance of survival is 90 per cent, which is outstanding compared to many other cancers,” Dr. Green shares. “However, in our region, we have one of the highest rates of “overdue for screening” in the province, at almost 50 per cent. This means half of the people in our region who are eligible have not been screened for colon cancer within the two-year guideline.”

There are many outlets for eligible people to receive a FIT kit, including your health care provider, the Screen for Life Coach (807-684-7777), and Health811 (1-866-828-9213).

If interested in finding out your personal risk for developing colon cancer, as well as five other types of cancers, visit [www.MyCancerIQ.ca](http://www.MyCancerIQ.ca). This simple, online self-assessment tool includes a personalized action plan for all individuals that can be shared with family and health care providers.

For more information on colon cancer screening in Ontario, visit [www.tbrhsc.net/cancerscreening](http://www.tbrhsc.net/cancerscreening).

# MEDIA RELEASE



Thunder Bay Regional  
Health Sciences  
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*Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre (TBRHSC), 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. To fulfill its teaching and research strategic goals, TBRHSC is supported by Thunder Bay Regional Health Research Institute (TBRHRI) as a not-for-profit and independent research corporation. TBRHRI is the research arm of TBRHSC and seeks to lead research to improve the health outcome of the people of Northwestern Ontario and beyond.*

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