



A CUP OF HEALTH WITH CDC

Catch Cancer Early

Cancer Screening — United States, 2010

Recorded: January 24, 2012; posted: January 26, 2012

[Announcer] This program is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

[Dr. Gaynes] Welcome to *A Cup of Health with CDC*, a weekly feature of the *MMWR*, the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. I'm your host, Dr. Robert Gaynes.

Cancer is the second leading cause of death in the United States. However, advances in both detection and treatment of various cancers have made surviving much more likely.

Dr. Sallyann Coleman King is a physician with CDC's Division of Cancer Prevention and Control. She's joining us by phone today to discuss the importance of getting regular cancer screenings. Welcome to the show, Sallyann.

[Dr. King] Hi. Thanks for having me.

[Dr. Gaynes] Sallyann, how many people die from cancer each year in the U.S.?

[Dr. King] Well, each year, more than a half a million people die from cancer, and our population's aging so we, unfortunately, believe this number will probably increase over time.

[Dr. Gaynes] How have advances in detection and treatment affected cancer death rates in the U.S.?

[Dr. King] Cancer screening tests help us find cancers early, when they're more treatable. Finding cancers early and then providing treatment is the best way to decrease the number of cancer deaths. For example, we know that cancer detection for breast cancer has improved treatment and has resulted in fewer breast cancer deaths in the last 20 years.

[Dr. Gaynes] Well, what cancers cause the most deaths?

[Dr. King] For men and women in the U.S., lung cancer, prostate cancer, breast cancer, and colorectal cancers cause the most deaths. And when we look at breast cancer and colorectal cancers by themselves, they alone cause almost 100,000 deaths a year. We believe a lot more can be done to reduce the number of cancer deaths, by getting people in to have their recommended cancer screenings.

[Dr. Gaynes] What cancer screening tests are recommended and how often should people get them?

[Dr. King] Well, the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force recommends that women get mammograms every two years to detect breast cancer and a pap smear every three years for cervical cancer. Now, colorectal screening's a little more complicated. There are a few different

approaches. Men and women can receive either a stool test kit to complete at home every year; a sigmoidoscopy every five years, combined with a stool test kit every three years; or a colonoscopy every 10 years.

[Dr. Gaynes] Well when should a person start getting screened for these various cancers?

[Dr. King] For most adults who are at average risk, the screening for breast cancer and colorectal cancer should begin at age 50, and screening for cervical cancer should begin by 21 or within three years of first intercourse, whichever occurs first. But it's important to keep in mind that everybody needs to discuss cancer screening with their own physician to decide when they, personally, should begin testing and what type of screening is right for them.

[Dr. Gaynes] Sallyann, where can listeners get more information about cancer screening?

[Dr. King] Listeners can go to www.cdc.gov/cancer.

[Dr. Gaynes] Thanks, Sallyann. I've been talking today with Dr. Sallyann Coleman King of CDC's Division of Cancer Prevention and Control about the importance of getting screened regularly for cancer.

Remember, for most adults, screening for both breast and colorectal cancers should begin at age 50, and women should begin getting tested for cervical cancer at age 21. If you aren't currently getting these tests, or have questions about which tests are right for you, make an appointment with your health care provider.

Until next time, be well. This is Dr. Robert Gaynes for *A Cup of Health with CDC*.

[Announcer] For the most accurate health information, visit www.cdc.gov or call 1-800-CDC-INFO.