

Tips to Educate College Students About Colorectal Cancer Among Young Adults

One of the most effective ways to increase awareness of these tips is through health education.

November 8, 2023 By [Colon Cancer Foundation](#)

The Colon Cancer Foundation and the 2024 Early-Age Onset Colorectal Cancer (EAO-CRC) Chair, Dr. Cathy Eng of the Young Adult Cancer Program at Vanderbilt-Ingram Cancer Center, [will be hosting the 8th Annual EAO-CRC Summit in Nashville, Tennessee](#), which will provide the grounds for discussions about the latest technological and medical advances, how to build community, and about what actions can be taken at various levels to address the rise in EAO-CRC.

Colorectal cancer (CRC) is the third most common cancer among men and women. This cancer occurs more often in the older population, yet there has been a rapid rise in CRC incidence among young people. Early-Age Onset (EAO) CRC refers to cases of colon or rectal cancer that occur in people under the age of 50 years. There has been an [annual increase in these cases of approximately 2% since 2011](#)

Some of the best ways to prevent CRC or avoid unfavorable outcomes include on-time screening ([starting at age 45 years](#) – earlier if there are symptoms or family history), knowing the risk factors and family history, and consulting medical professionals when potential symptoms arise. One of the most effective ways to increase awareness of these solutions is through health education.

How Can We Encourage Health Education on EAO-CRC for College Students?

There are several opportunities to host educational events. The implementation of peer educators in colleges and universities is a cost-effective approach that allows students to impart valuable knowledge to their peers about meaningful and healthy lifestyle changes. While health outlooks differ, health education can be tailored to specific audiences to increase the likelihood that someone can reach and maintain their concept of optimal health.

Health education events can appear as presentations, panels, tabling, and expositions.

Presentations

- Longer, more information-dense messaging
- Can incorporate interactive questions and activities and pre/post surveys that allow participants

to think critically about what they have learned and about how they will apply it to their lives moving forward. Information pamphlets and giveaways can also bolster interactivity.

- Key takeaways: Elaborate and in-depth, allows for active participation, and allows for future action to be taken.

Panels

- Question and answer sessions. These can allow for an increased sense of closeness.

Panelists can provide a variety of perspectives germane to their topic

- They can share anecdotes and experiences – personal, occupational, or both

Specific contact information can be provided in case an audience member wishes to reach out to a panelist.

- Key takeaways: Allows sharing of diverse viewpoints, opportunity for an open dialogue

Tabling Events

- Drop-by event; can give quick overviews
- Opportunity to share information pamphlets and giveaways
- Can host activities to engage visitors in discussion and have giveaways
- Key takeaways: Cost- and time-effective, succinct, and engaging – tabling events are a popular health education method

Colleges and universities can host one or more of these events to increase awareness on risk factors, symptoms, the need to consult a medical professional if symptoms occur, and the importance of regular screening. As for timing, it is best to do so on days where there are not as many classes, in populous areas, and during a time of day when there is a higher influx of people, such as around a mealtime or when a certain timeblock for classes commonly ends.

March is Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month. Consider a tabling event with information about the disease and with some free merchandise. Students can also be encouraged to wear dark blue to increase awareness of CRC.

This blog was published by the [Colon Cancer Foundation](#) on October 18, 2023. It is republished with permission.

