



# Panhandle Health District

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**Public Health**  
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**Panhandle Health District**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Panhandle Health District Offers Free Colon Cancer Screening Kits in Benewah County**

**ST. MARIES, ID** -- Panhandle Health District (PHD) is rolling out a new program providing at-home cancer screening kits to people at risk of colorectal cancer. PHD's Benewah County clinic in St. Maries is now offering a free take-home FIT (Fecal Immunochemical Test) kit to all individuals who meet screening guidelines.

The FIT is a test to check for tiny amounts of blood, which could detect cancer or pre-cancer. FIT can be done at home by following the instructions provided in the kit. There is no preparation required for the test. If blood is found, then further consultation with a nurse practitioner will determine what follow-up procedures or referrals may be needed.

Colorectal cancer is the third most common cancer in both men and women, and is expected to cause nearly 50,000 deaths in the United States each year, per the American Cancer Society. If caught early by routine screening, the prognosis for patients with colorectal cancer is quite good.

Benewah County was chosen to pilot the program after [data](#) estimated a 50% mortality rate for residents, which is significantly higher than other counties within Panhandle Health District.

"Colorectal cancer screening saves lives, yet barriers such as time constraints, lack of insurance, and colonoscopy prep requirements prevent people from getting tested. FIT tests have proven to increase colorectal cancer screening rates in communities across the country," said Erin Whitehead, Health Education Specialist at Panhandle Health District.

To receive a kit, you must be a Benewah County resident, 50-75 years of age, have not had a colonoscopy within the last ten years or a sigmoidoscopy within the past five years or a FIT or FOBT kit within the past year. An appointment is necessary to ensure

you meet the requirements and understand how to properly execute the test at home.  
For questions or to make an appointment, call (208) 245-4556.

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