

Can Personalized Lifestyle Advice Lower Cancer Risk?

Tailored feedback at colorectal cancer screenings increased preventive lifestyle behaviors.

December 7, 2018 By [Alicia Green](#)

Individuals who receive tailored lifestyle feedback during colorectal screenings are more likely to follow a healthy routine, suggest new findings published in *Cancer Epidemiology, Biomarkers & Prevention*, a journal of the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR), reports [AACR](#).

Researchers invited more than 3,600 southeastern Norwegian men and women between ages 50 and 74 to receive a sigmoidoscopy (a minimally invasive procedure used to screen for colorectal cancer). In the end, a little over 1,000 people enrolled in the study.

For the [study](#), participants completed a lifestyle questionnaire prior to screening and another one a year after screening. Questions addressed smoking status, weight, alcohol consumption, physical activity and fruit, vegetable and meat (processed or red) intake.

Participants were then randomly assigned to receive either individually tailored written feedback on their health habits; a standard leaflet about healthy behaviors; or nothing at all.

When it came time to answer the second questionnaire, which focused on cancer preventive lifestyle behaviors, researchers found that participants who received the individually tailored feedback had increased their number of cancer preventive behaviors by 0.11 compared with the control group.

What's more, the changes were greater among those who didn't previously follow a healthy lifestyle. (These individuals underwent a significant larger weight loss.)

"The benefit of teaching cancer preventive behavior in the setting of population-based screening is that it could increase chances of reaching a major portion of the relevant age group or demographic," said the study's lead author Markus Dines Knudsen, PhD, of the Department of Bowel Screening at the Cancer Registry of Norway in Oslo and the Department of Research and Development at Telemark Hospital in Skein, Norway.

Knudsen also notes, "At the time of screening, these people may be more responsive to information about cancer prevention," which could potentially lower cancer risk.

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