

A Special Message from CEO John Seffrin, Ph.D. on Cancer Screening

Atlanta 2009/10/23 -Recently there's been some media attention about the American Cancer Society and our views on cancer screening that may have been confusing to some. We wanted to be sure that as a valued supporter, you heard directly from us about where we stand on this topic.

The bottom line? We know that screening saves lives and creates more birthdays. We encourage women at average risk to get mammograms starting at age 40, to get Pap tests as soon as they are sexually active or no later than age 21, and both men and women at average risk to get screened for colon cancer starting at age 50.

Scientific studies prove these tests' importance – and in fact we know that 300 more birthdays are being celebrated each and every day thanks in part to cancer screenings.

Yet we have long acknowledged that cancer screening isn't perfect. Sometimes cancers get overlooked. Sometimes cancers get misdiagnosed. Sometimes aggressive cancers can appear even after a clear screening test. It is important to acknowledge these limitations, understand them, discuss them with your doctor, and decide what is right for you.

We are committed to offering you the very best and latest information on all issues related to cancer so that you can do your part to stay well. We are constantly evaluating our screening guidelines based on current science, and we may from time to time change our views and recommendations. There are some cancers for which we don't currently recommend screening, such as prostate cancer, because the benefits are unclear or unproven. We continue to aggressively search for new and more effective ways to detect, prevent, and treat these and all types of cancer.

Thanks for everything you do,

John R. Seffrin, PhD

Chief Executive Officer

American Cancer Society, Inc.

American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network
