TO BE FORWARDED TO ELIGIBLE EMPLOYEES:

10 risk factors of colon cancer
Colon cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death in the U.S. The good news is that it’s also one of the most preventable.

Most people do not look forward to having a colonoscopy. But it’s important to overcome any fear or embarrassment to be able to detect colon cancer in its earliest stages. Polyps are tiny, pimple-like growths found in the colon. If they are not detected, they can become cancerous and grow benign and malignant tumors. These tumors can then spread throughout the body if nothing is done to screen, prevent or treat them. The only way to detect colon polyps is by colonoscopy.

These 10 factors may increase your risk for colon cancer:

1. **Age.** People older than age 50 tend to get colon cancer more frequently than those younger than 50.

2. **African American.** African Americans are statistically more likely to get colon cancer.

3. **History of colon polyps.** If you’ve been screened before and polyps were removed, you may be more prone to developing colon cancer.

4. **Inflammatory diseases.** Crohn’s disease and other bowel diseases increase your chances of getting colon cancer.

5. **Inherited diseases.** While rare, some families have inherited conditions that increase their risk for colon disease.

6. **Family history of colon cancer or polyps.** If you have a parent, sibling or child who has or had colon cancer, you may have a greater risk.

7. **Obesity.** People who are overweight or obese are more likely to develop colon cancer, among other diseases.

8. **Lack of exercise.** People who don’t get their heart pumping tend to develop colon cancer and other diseases.

9. **Smoking.** Tobacco use has been shown to increase the likelihood of getting colon cancer.
10. **Alcoholism.** Heavy use of alcohol also increases the chances of developing many diseases, including those of the colon.

   -- *Information provided by Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Dakota*

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All Members should consult their personal physician before beginning any exercise or weight loss program. Prior to seeking additional services, please refer to your “Certificate of Insurance & Summary Plan Description” for a list of covered services, limitations, and exclusions.