

## PREFERRED MESSAGES

Effective messages motivate individuals to take action by presenting valuable information in a concise, direct, and interesting way. Good public health messages inform the public about meaningful topics with convincing facts and accessible next steps.

Research shows that the public has a high level of awareness about colorectal cancer screening. Much of the awareness is due to the sustained and collective efforts of public health stakeholders. Their dedication to improving local and national colorectal cancer screening rates has had a significant effect.

The messages that follow were the most preferred across a diverse range of demographic profiles. In the descriptions, the audience message preference rankings (first, second, third) are not related to the measured increased likelihood of screening percentages.

The messages in this guide are not meant to replace the screening campaigns of any organization. Instead, they are intended to strengthen the educational and promotional materials available to unscreened populations.

Our market research survey tested 13 distinct colorectal cancer screening messages ([see Appendix](#)). The goal was to identify the most preferred messages that were likely to move respondents to action. Test messages included logical and emotional drivers that were proven to generate interest in screening. For example, motivational drivers included affordability, prevention, control, and options.



#1 MOST PREFERRED

## The Most Preferred Screening Message

**A colonoscopy isn't the only option for colorectal cancer screening. There are simple, affordable options, including tests that can be done at home. Talk to your doctor about which option is right for you. Ask which tests are covered by your health insurance.**

### Key Motivational Driver

Options for colorectal cancer screening tests.

**23%** Increased Likelihood of Screening

After exposure to this message, 23% of unscreened adults aged 50 and older indicated they would be more likely to get screened in the next six months.

## Why It Works

- **Inclusive** – This message contains motivators for everyone because it encompasses many of the barriers that prevent different groups from getting screened.
- **Options** – The term “at home” increases comfort, reduces fears, and reduces embarrassment. It also suggests an easy method for those without symptoms or family history.
- **Time** – It resonates with those concerned about the time needed to get a colonoscopy.
- **Cost** – It communicates that screening for colorectal cancer can be affordable.
- **Control** – It enables individuals to feel in control, regardless of other barriers.
- **Fear** – It reduces the fear associated with preparation and colonoscopy procedures.



## Where to Use This Message

This message had a positive impact across subgroups and included the financially challenged and those with a mindset of invincibility. This message also rated highly among rural dwellers and those who were fearful or procrastinators.

#2 MOST PREFERRED

## The Second-Most Preferred Screening Message

**Right now, you could have a polyp, a small growth in your colon or rectum. Right now, your polyp may be harmless, but over time it could develop into colorectal cancer. Right now, through regular screening, you have the power to find and remove precancerous polyps and prevent colorectal cancer. Call your doctor and take control of your health!**

### Key Motivational Driver

Colorectal cancer can be detected early.

### 21% Increased Likelihood of Screening

After exposure to this message, 21% of unscreened adults aged 50 and older reported they would be likely to get tested in the next six months.

## Why It Works

- **Early Detection** – This message creates an opportunity to fix problems and prevent future issues. It is a proactive message.
- **New Information** – This message made individuals think. It also challenged the assumption that colorectal cancer could not happen to them.
- **Emotional Appeal** – It was described as scary enough to motivate an individual to take action.
- **Control** – It positively framed their ability to take control.
- **Healthy Choice** – It appealed to the desire to have good health as long as possible.

## Where to Use This Message

This message had a positive impact across subgroups and created the greatest percent increase in the Invincibles subgroup. It resonated with African American and Hispanic respondents and tested as impactful in the preoccupied busy bees subgroup.



#3 MOST PREFERRED

## The Third-Most Preferred Screening Message

Preventing colorectal cancer or finding it early is possible through regular screening. There are many test options, including simple, affordable tests. Talk to your doctor about the right option for you and about whether your health insurance covers tests.

### Key Motivational Driver

Colorectal cancer can be prevented.

22%

### Increased Likelihood of Screening

After exposure to this message, 22% of unscreened adults aged 50 and older indicated a likelihood to be screened in the next six months

## Why It Works

- **Broad** – This message combined elements that addressed the top concerns of respondents.
- **New Information** – Colorectal cancer can be prevented.
- **Options** – The message of available options increased the comfort level of being screened.
- **Affordable** – Screening options can be affordable.



## Where to Use This Message

This message resonated well across subgroups, with the greatest change among the financially challenged and invincibles subgroups. This message also had a notable impact on the young 50, women, and Hispanic subgroups.