

COLORECTAL CANCER



Quick Facts:

- Colorectal Cancer (CRC), also called colon cancer, starts in the colon or rectum.
- Most colorectal cancers begin as precancerous polyps that develop slowly over time.
- CRC is the 3rd most common cancer worldwide and a leading cause of cancer-related death.*
- Risk increases with age, especially after 45, but anyone can develop CRC.
- While CRC is very common, it's highly treatable when detected early by screenings.

*Worldwide data show CRC typically ranks third in incidence but second in cause of cancer-related deaths globally. Recent trends show an increasing incidence in younger adults. For individuals under 50, colorectal cancer has surpassed other cancers to become the number one cause of cancer-related deaths.

SYMPTOMS

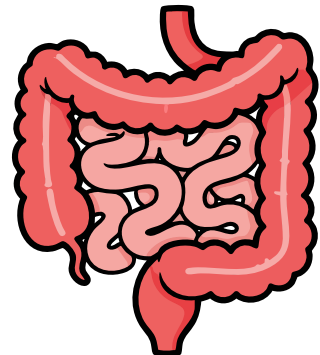
- Early colorectal cancer often has **no symptoms**, so screening is key.
- If you notice any of these symptoms, speak with your healthcare provider:
 - Blood in the stool or rectal bleeding
 - Persistent changes in bowel habits, such as diarrhea or constipation
 - Ongoing abdominal pain, cramping, or bloating
 - Unexplained weight loss
 - Fatigue or weakness

PREVENTION

- Healthy lifestyle choices can lower your risk by supporting digestion, metabolic health, and overall cancer risk reduction.
- Engage in regular physical activity, like walking!
- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Eat a diet rich in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. Limit processed foods, added sugar, and red meat.
- Avoid tobacco and limit alcohol intake.
- Learn more and take a risk assessment at www.colorectalcaner.org

SCREENING

- Screening is the most effective way to prevent and detect colorectal cancer early by detecting and removing polyps.
- Screening should begin at **age 45** (earlier if you have a family history or certain medical conditions, such as inflammatory bowel disease).
- Screenings are typically covered by insurance.



Types of Screenings:

- **Colonoscopy:** Considered the gold standard screening test, it uses a flexible, lighted scope to examine the entire colon, allows detection and removal of precancerous polyps during the same procedure, and is typically repeated every **10 years** if results are normal.
- **Stool-Based Tests** (e.g., FIT, Cologuard): Completed at home and usually done **annually** or at recommended intervals, these tests are less invasive but slightly less sensitive than colonoscopy, and a positive result requires follow-up with a colonoscopy.
- Other screening options are available. Talk with your doctor about which test is right for you.