



# HealthyPeople

## COLON CANCER AWARENESS

Colorectal cancer (cancer of the colon or rectum), when discovered early, is highly treatable. Even if it spreads into nearby lymph nodes, surgical treatment followed by chemotherapy is highly effective. In the most difficult cases — when the cancer has spread to the liver, lungs or other sites — treatment can help make surgery an option for many, as well as prolonging and adding to one's quality of life. Research is constantly being done to learn more and provide hope for people no matter what stage their cancer is in.

Most colorectal cancers develop first as polyps, which are abnormal growths inside the colon or rectum that may later become cancerous if not removed.

Colorectal cancer is the third most common cancer in the US, and the second leading cause of cancer death. It affects men and women of all racial and ethnic groups, and is most often found in people 50 years or older. However incidence in those younger than 50 is on the rise. This disease takes the lives of more than 50,000 people every year; education and screenings are the keys to preventing this disease and lowering that statistic.

If you're 50 to 75 years old, get screened for colorectal cancer regularly. If you're younger than 50 and think you may be at high risk of getting colorectal cancer, or if you're older than 75, ask your doctor if you should be screened.

There are several screening test options. Talk with your doctor about which is right for you.



## KNOW THE SYMPTOMS

Colorectal cancer first develops with few, if any, symptoms. Be proactive and talk to your doctor. If symptoms are present, they may include:

### A CHANGE IN BOWEL HABITS

Including diarrhea, constipation, a change in the consistency of your stool or finding your stools are narrower than usual.

### PERSISTENT ABDOMINAL DISCOMFORT

Such as cramps, gas, or pain and/or feeling full, bloated or that your bowel does not empty completely.

### RECTAL BLEEDING

Finding blood (either bright red or very dark) in your stool.

### WEAKNESS OR FATIGUE

Can also accompany losing weight for no known reason, nausea or vomiting.

Colorectal cancer symptoms can also be associated with many other health conditions. Only a medical professional can determine the cause of your symptoms. Early signs of cancer often do not include pain. It is important **not** to wait before seeing a doctor. Early detection can save your life.