

The Prevent Cancer Foundation and 58 collaborating partners joined forces to designate March as National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month. Its mission is to increase awareness that colorectal cancer is largely preventable, treatable and beatable through regular screening tests, a healthy lifestyle and expert clinical care.



Colorectal Cancer

Preventable. Treatable. Beatable!

RESEARCH • EDUCATION • OUTREACH

1600 Duke Street, Suite 500 • Alexandria, VA 22314

703-836-4412 • Fax: 703-836-4413

www.preventcancer.org

Colorectal Cancer

PREVENTABLE • TREATABLE • BEATABLE



Colorectal Cancer Is Preventable and Easily Treated When Detected Early.

With regular screening tests and simple lifestyle changes you can reduce your risk of colorectal cancer.



What Is Colorectal Cancer?

Colorectal cancer is cancer of the colon or the rectum. It is nearly 90 percent preventable, because it develops from polyps—grape-like growths on the lining of the colon and rectum—that may become cancerous. Screening tests can detect polyps so that they can be removed before they ever become cancer. It was estimated that 148,000 people were diagnosed with colorectal cancer in 2007. **It affects an equal number of men and women. It is the third leading cause of cancer death in the United States.**

Who's At Risk?

Colorectal cancer (CRC) can affect anyone—men or women. Risk for CRC increases as we grow older. It's recommended that all men and women age 50 begin regular screening tests. African-Americans, Alaska Natives and some American Indian tribes and Hispanics are often diagnosed at later, less curable stages of the disease. Some people are at greater risk for colorectal cancer and may need to be screened earlier.

These include people with:

- A personal or family history of colorectal polyps, colorectal cancer or inflammatory bowel disease.
- A family history of hereditary or familial colon cancer syndromes.
- People who use tobacco, are obese and/or are sedentary.

Take Action!

1. Get Screened

There are several colorectal screening tests available. To find out which test is right for you, talk with your health care professional using this list as a guide.

Beginning at age 50:*

- A colonoscopy every 10 years.
- Have a yearly fecal occult blood test (FOBT) or fecal immunohistochemical test (FIT).
- Have a sigmoidoscopy together with an FOBT every five years.

Men and women at higher risk should talk with their health care professional about what tests they should have and when. More frequent and earlier testing may be right for you.

* The American College of Gastroenterology recommends that African Americans begin screening at 45 rather than the usually recommended age of 50.

2. Exercise

Regular physical activity can decrease a person's risk for colorectal cancer and many other health concerns. Exercise can reduce the risk for developing polyps in the colon, which can become cancer. Exercise also increases your overall well-being.

Exercise for between 30 and 60 minutes a day five days each week. Moderate exercise such as brisk walking, gardening or climbing stairs can be helpful.

3. Maintain a Healthy Weight

Obesity has been linked to colorectal cancer, as well as several other diseases. Being overweight may increase levels of some hormones in the body, which may increase your risk for some cancers.



Maintain a healthy weight—a low-fat diet and regular exercise may help.

4. Reduce Fat in Your Diet

Fat in your diet has been linked to a number of cancers, including colorectal cancer. High fat diets have been shown to increase risk of tumors in animals. In countries with high fat diets, there is a higher incidence of colorectal cancer.

Make your diet low-fat. Fatty foods should not make up more than one-third of the calories you eat daily. Eat less animal fat, and more fruits and vegetables to reduce your risk.

5. Eat a Plant-Based Diet

A good deal of research shows that a plant based diet rich in fresh fruits and vegetables and whole grains is beneficial to your overall health. This healthy diet eaten over your lifetime may protect you against a number of cancers.

Eat five servings of fruits and vegetables

each day. An adult serving, for example, equals a medium piece of fruit, $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of fruit juice or a $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of tomato sauce. For a small child between age two and six years old, one small apple or a banana, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruit juice and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of green beans makes one serving. Also, be sure to add whole grains to your diet from breads, cereals, nuts and beans.

6. Reduce Alcohol Use

Heavy alcohol use has been associated with colorectal cancer. Alcohol in combination with tobacco is linked to colorectal cancer and other cancers of the gastrointestinal tract.

If you use alcohol, drink only in moderation—two or fewer drinks a day for men and one drink for women. If you use tobacco, quit. If you don't use tobacco, don't start.

Symptoms

In early stages of colorectal cancer, there may not be any symptoms. Later these symptoms may appear:

Rectal bleeding or blood in or on the stool

Change in bowel habits

Stools that are narrower than usual

General stomach discomfort (bloating, fullness and/or cramps)

Diarrhea, constipation or feeling that the bowel does not empty completely

Weight loss for no apparent reason

Constant fatigue

Vomiting

