

## **Colorectal Cancer**

### **What is Colorectal Cancer?**

Colorectal Cancer starts in the colon or rectum. Most colorectal cancers start as a small growth on the lining of the colon or rectum called polyps. It can take 10-15 years for a polyp to become cancer. This means that colorectal cancer screening is an effective way to prevent these changes from occurring.

[What Is Colorectal Cancer? | How Does Colorectal Cancer Start? | American Cancer Society](#)

[Colorectal Cancer Prevention and Screening](#)

<https://www.cancer.gov/types/colorectal>



THE BEST TEST IS THE ONE THAT GETS DONE.  
GET SCREENED.

### **Colorectal Cancer Prevention and Risk Factors**

There is no absolute way to prevent colorectal cancer. However, understanding your risk for colorectal cancer can help you make informed decisions about your health. A risk factor is anything that increases your chances of developing cancer. There are various risk factors for colorectal cancer. Some risk factors can be changed while others cannot.

#### **Risk Factors You Can Control**

- Weight - Being overweight or obese increases your risk of colorectal cancer, particularly in men
- Diabetes - Having Type 2 Diabetes increases your risk of colorectal cancer
- Certain Diets - Certain types of diets, including long-term diets that are high in red meats and processed meats increases your risk of colorectal cancer. A diet that includes plenty of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains decreases your risk of colorectal cancer
- Tobacco Use - Smoking tobacco increases your risk of colorectal cancer
- Alcohol Use - Colorectal cancer is also linked to moderate and heavy alcohol use

#### **Risk Factors You Cannot Control**

- Age - Your colorectal cancer risk increases as you age. While younger individuals can be diagnosed, it is much more common after 50 years of age.
- Race - American Indian and Alaska Native people have the highest risk of colorectal cancer followed by African Americans.
- Gender – Men are more likely to die from colorectal cancer than women.
- Personal History – Having a personal history of colon polyps or a history of colorectal cancer puts you at an increased risk of colorectal cancer. A history of inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) can also increase your risk of colorectal cancer. Past cancer treatments such as radiation to the abdomen or pelvis area can increase your risk as well.

[Colorectal Cancer Risk Factors | Hereditary Colorectal Risk Factors | American Cancer Society](#)

## **What is Colorectal Cancer Screening?**

Screening is a way to look for cancer in people who have no symptoms. At home or in-office testing detects colorectal cancer using a stool sample. A colonoscopy looks directly at the colon for polyps (precancerous masses) which are removed. Effective screening and early detection makes treatment easier.

[Colorectal Cancer Prevention | How to Prevent Colorectal Cancer | American Cancer Society](#)

## **Should I be Screened for Colorectal Cancer?**

Ages 25-44: Work with your health care provider to determine your risk level; those at high risk should discuss their screening options with their health care provider.

Ages 45-75: Colorectal cancer screening starts at age 45 and should continue until age 75.

Ages 76 and over: Those 76 and older can determine with their health care provider if screening is right for them.

A variety of tests/testing methods are currently available. Ultimately any screening is better than no screening and can save a life. Talk to your doctor about what option is right for you.

[Detecting Colorectal Cancer | Can Colorectal Cancer Be Found Early? | American Cancer Society](#)

[Colorectal Cancer Guideline | How Often to Have Screening Tests | American Cancer Society](#)

[Colorectal Cancer Screening Tests | Sigmoidoscopy & Colonoscopy | American Cancer Society](#)



**PRO TIP: WHEN DOING COLONOSCOPY  
SCREENING PREP, USE WET WIPES FROM THE  
START**