



Colorectal Cancer

NAVIGATION GUIDE

This guide was created to help you understand your diagnosis, ask the right questions, and feel more prepared for conversations with your care team.

You are not alone. We're here to help.



Diagnosis Basics

Colorectal cancer begins in the colon or rectum. Learning the basics about your diagnosis is an important first step.

What I know:

Cancer type:

Location:

Date of diagnosis:

Doctor:



Staging

Staging describes how far the cancer has grown or spread. It helps your doctor determine the best treatment plan for you.

Stages:

I: Cancer is in the colon/rectum and has not spread.

II: Cancer has spread into the outer layers of the colon or rectum but has not spread to lymph nodes.

III: Cancer has spread to nearby lymph nodes.

IV: Cancer has been carried through lymph and blood systems to distant parts of the body.



Biomarker Testing

Knowing your biomarkers helps your doctor choose the most effective treatment plan while avoiding treatments that may not work for you.

Common biomarker tests in CRC:

- **DNA mutations** (RAS, BRAF, HER2)
- **DNA repair deficiencies** (MSI/MMR)
- **Protein markers** (CEA)

Learn more



Results Tracker

Use this checklist to track important information and test results.

- ☐ Diagnosis confirmed
Date: _____
- ☐ Cancer type & location
- ☐ Stage determined
Date: _____
- ☐ Imaging complete
Date: _____
- ☐ Biomarker test ordered
Date: _____
- ☐ Biomarker results received
Date: _____
- ☐ Biomarker(s) identified

- ☐ Treatment options discussed
Date: _____
- ☐ Next steps planned
Date: _____



Questions to ask your doctor

About Diagnosis

- What type of colorectal cancer do I have?
- Where is the cancer located?
- Has it spread?
- What tests are still needed?
- How may this guide treatment options?
- Who will be on my care team?

About Staging

- What stage is my cancer?
- What tests were used to determine it? Do I need more?
- Could my stage change after treatment?

About Biomarker Testing

- Is biomarker testing recommended for me?
- Have I had biomarker testing?
- How long will it take to get results?
- What is my biomarker profile?
- How do these results affect my treatment plan?

About Treatment

- What are my treatment options?
- What is the goal of treatment?
- Are there clinical trials I should consider?
- What are possible side effects?
- How will treatment affect daily life?

Ongoing Care

- How will I know if treatment is working?
- What follow-up tests will I need?
- Who should I contact if I have questions or concerns?



Tip: Take this guide with you to appointments and write down answers.



Notes & Next Steps

My next steps/upcoming appointments:

☐
☐
☐
☐
☐

Questions I still have:

Things I want to remember:

This guide is for educational purposes only and not a substitute for professional medical advice. Always talk with your healthcare provider about your specific situation.

ccalliance.org

Helpline: (877) 422-2030



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The Colorectal Cancer Alliance is a national organization committed to ending colorectal cancer within our lifetime. We are your allies — a national network of passionate survivors, caregivers and advocates dedicated to helping you and your family navigate all aspects of the disease, from diagnosis and treatment to a lifetime of progression-free survival. We are a community of people eager to share experiences, address your concerns, and answer your questions. We understand the different stages of the colon cancer journey because we've been there. We are here for you when you need us because we believe tomorrow can't wait.