

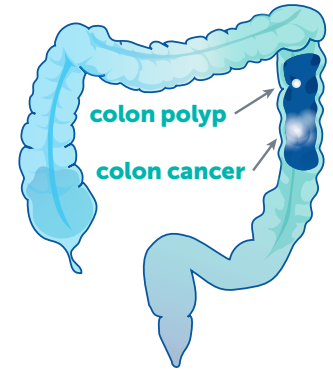
FAQs: Colorectal Cancer

What is colorectal cancer?

Colorectal cancer, or CRC, refers to colon cancer and rectal cancer. Unlike most cancers, colorectal cancer is often preventable with screening and highly treatable when detected early. Still, more than 150,000 people are diagnosed with CRC every year in the U.S., and more than 50,000 die.

Colorectal cancer starts as an abnormal tissue growth, which is called a polyp, inside the colon or rectum. With the help of screening tests, doctors can find polyps and remove them, which prevents colorectal cancer from developing.

Most cases of colorectal cancer occur in people ages 45 and older, but the disease is increasingly affecting younger people. Today, more than 1 in 10 colorectal cancer patients are under age 50.



When should screening begin?

Screening is the No. 1 way to prevent colorectal cancer or find it early, when it's most treatable. Colorectal cancer usually develops over 10 to 15 years, often without symptoms. When screening finds CRC early, survival rates are as high as 90%.

It's important for all people at average risk to get screened starting at age 45. Most people have screening options, including colonoscopy, stool-DNA, and FIT (fecal immunochemical test). People with risk factors may require earlier screening, as advised by a health care provider.

What are the risk factors?

People of any age, gender, and fitness level can develop colorectal cancer. Certain conditions may increase risk and require earlier screening, including:

- Inflammatory bowel diseases such as Crohn's disease or ulcerative colitis
- A personal or family history of colorectal cancer or colorectal polyps
- A genetic syndrome such as familial adenomatous polyposis (FAP) or hereditary non-polyposis colorectal cancer (Lynch syndrome)

What are the symptoms?

The most common symptom of colorectal cancer is no symptom, and that's why routine screening is critical. If symptoms are present, they may include:

- Blood in or on stool
- Persistent unusual bowel movements like constipation or diarrhea
- Stomach pain, aches, or cramps that don't go away
- Losing weight for no reason

Find out what screening test is right for you! Take our short quiz at quiz.getscreened.org.

canceralliance.org | Helpline: (877) 422-2030

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.

