

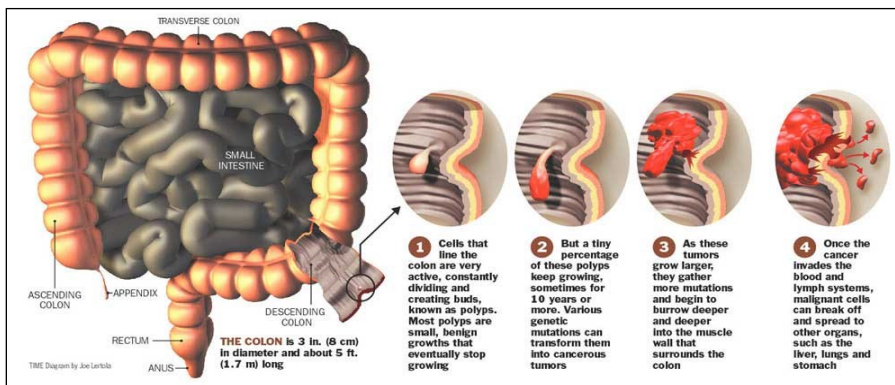


Cancer Health Facts

Awareness. Hope. Believe. Cure. Love. Early Detection. We Can Win This Fight.

What is Colorectal Cancer?

Colon cancer is cancer of the large intestine (colon), the lower part of your digestive system. Rectal cancer is cancer of the last several inches of the colon. Together, they're often referred to as colorectal cancers.



Colon cancer—from Polyp to Tumor

Most cases of colon cancer begin as small, noncancerous (benign) clumps of cells called adenomatous polyps. Colorectal cancer occurs when some of the cells that line the colon or the rectum become abnormal and grow out of control. The abnormal growing cells create a tumor, which is the cancer.

Polyps may be small and produce few, if any, symptoms. For this reason, doctors recommend regular screening tests to help prevent colon cancer by identifying polyps before they become colon cancer.

Risk Factors for Colorectal Cancer

Risk factors that may increase your chance of getting colon cancer include:

Older age	Racial and ethnic background	Inflammatory intestinal conditions	Inherited syndromes	Family history	Low-fiber, high-fat diet
Diabetes	Obesity	Smoking	Heavy alcohol use	Radiation therapy	Sedentary lifestyle

Numbers at a Glance

2nd

Leading cause of cancer and leading cause of cancer death—Colorectal Cancer

9 out of 10

If found EARLY, 9 out of 10 will survive

1 out of 10

If found LATE, 1 out of 10 survive

53%

Colorectal cancer is 53% higher in Northern Plains American Indians

49,380

People will die from colorectal cancer this year



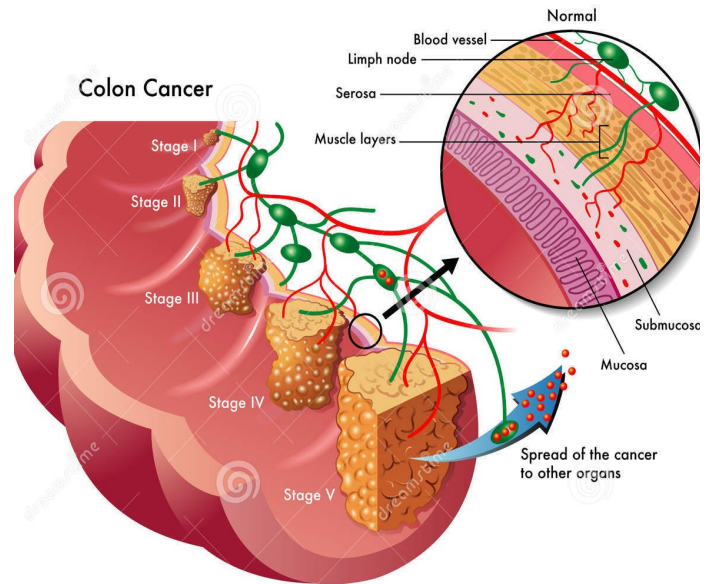
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Signs & Symptoms of Colon Cancer

Signs and symptoms of colon cancer include:

- A change in your bowel habits or consistency of your stool, including diarrhea or constipation
- Rectal bleeding or blood in your stool
- Persistent abdominal discomfort, such as cramps, gas or pain
- A feeling that your bowel does not completely empty
- Weakness or fatigue
- Unexplained weight loss

Many people with colon cancer experience no symptoms in the early stages of the disease. When symptoms appear, they'll likely vary, depending on the cancer's size and location in your large intestine.



Stages of colon cancer.

Treatment for Colon Cancer

The type of treatment your doctor recommends will depend largely on the stage of your cancer. The three primary treatment options are: surgery, chemotherapy and radiation.

Surgery for invasive colon cancer: If your colon cancer has grown into or through your colon, your surgeon may recommend a partial colectomy to remove the part of your colon that contains the cancer, along with a margin of normal tissue on either side of the cancer. Nearby lymph nodes are usually also removed and tested for cancer. Your surgeon is often able to reconnect the healthy portions of your colon or rectum.

Chemotherapy: Chemotherapy uses drugs to destroy cancer cells. Chemotherapy for colon cancer is usually given after surgery if the cancer has spread to the lymph nodes. In this way, chemotherapy may help reduce the risk of cancer recurrence. Chemotherapy can also be given to relieve symptoms of colon cancer that has spread to other areas of the body. Chemotherapy may be used before surgery to shrink the cancer before an operation. In people with rectal cancer, chemotherapy is typically used along with radiation therapy.

Radiation therapy: Radiation therapy uses powerful energy sources, such as X-rays, to kill cancer cells that might remain after surgery, to shrink large tumors before an operation so that they can be removed more easily, or to relieve symptoms of colon cancer and rectal cancer. Radiation therapy is rarely used in early-stage colon cancer, but is a routine part of treating rectal cancer, especially if the cancer has penetrated through the wall of the rectum or traveled to nearby lymph nodes.



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