

# Why is it important to find colorectal cancer early?

It can take as many as 10 to 15 years for a polyp to develop into colorectal cancer. Regular screening can prevent many cases of colorectal cancer altogether by finding and removing certain types of polyps before they have the chance to turn into cancer. Screening can also help find colorectal cancer early, when it's small, hasn't spread, and is easier to treat.

When colorectal cancer is found at an early stage before it has spread, the 5-year relative survival rate is about 90%. When colorectal cancer isn't found early and ends up spreading outside the colon or rectum, survival rates are lower.

## Survival rates decrease as the stages increase.

### Stages of colorectal cancer:

- **Polyp:** Most colorectal cancers develop from these noncancerous growths.
- **In Situ:** Cancer has formed, but is not yet growing into the colon walls.
- **Local:** Cancer is growing in the colon, but not yet to lymph nodes.
- **Regional:** Growth beyond colon wall into tissue or lymph nodes.
- **Distant:** Cancer has spread to other parts of the body, such as liver or lungs.



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## Catch Colorectal Cancer Early

Colorectal cancer is the **second leading cause of cancer death** in the U.S. among men and women combined, yet it's one of the most preventable. Beat the odds and get screened.



## Screening Options

Screening is the process of looking for cancer or pre-cancer in people who have no symptoms of the disease. Regular screening can often find colorectal cancer early, when it is most likely to be curable. Screening can also prevent colorectal cancer by finding and removing polyps before they have the chance to turn into cancer. The most common screenings are:

### Colonoscopy

A narrow, lighted tube with a camera is used to look at the entire length of the colon and rectum. With a colonoscopy, doctors can find and remove polyps to help prevent cancer before it starts. Patients are usually given drugs to make them sleepy during a colonoscopy.

### Stool Test

Stool tests, like the fecal immunochemical test (FIT), are tests you can take at home. A FIT test is used to find blood in the stool that isn't visible to the naked eye. Blood in the stool could be a sign of cancer or large polyps. Talk to your primary care physician about your personal risk for colorectal cancer and the screening options right for you.

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**Talk to your primary care physician about colorectal cancer screening options.**

# What you can do to lower your risk

**Regular colorectal cancer screening is one of the most powerful weapons for preventing colorectal cancer.**

**Risk may be further reduced by regular physical activity; staying at a healthy body weight; limiting intake of red meat and processed meats; not smoking; limiting alcohol intake; and eating plenty of fruits, vegetables, and whole-grain foods.**



## What is Colorectal Cancer?

Most colorectal cancers begin as a growth on the inner lining of the colon, a muscular tube about 5 feet long. These growths are known as polyps. If cancer forms in a polyp, it can begin to grow into the wall of the colon and eventually start to spread to other parts of the body.

## How Common is Colorectal Cancer?

Excluding skin cancers, colorectal cancer is the third most common cancer diagnosed in both men and women in the United States and the third leading cause of cancer-related deaths in both men and women. But it can be prevented. Factors such as: age, ethnicity, medical history, and genetics can also affect your risk for developing colorectal cancer.

**1 in 23 lifetime risk for men**

**1 in 25 lifetime risk for women**

