



What is Colorectal Cancer?

Colorectal cancer starts in the colon or the rectum. These cancers can also be called colon cancer or rectal cancer, depending on where they start. Colon cancer and rectal cancer are often grouped together because they have many features in common.

Most colorectal cancers start as a growth on the inner lining of the colon or rectum. These growths are called polyps. Some types of polyps can change into cancer over time (usually many years), but not all polyps become cancer.



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COMPREHENSIVE CANCER CARE



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Screening

Screening begins at age 45.
Screening tests for colorectal cancer include:

Colonoscopy

A one-step test that looks for growths called polyps throughout your colon (large intestine) and rectum using a colonoscope. If polyps are found, they are removed and examined to see if they are pre-cancerous or not. If the results are normal, the colonoscopy may be done once every 10 years.

Stool-Based Home Tests

There are different types of tests to perform at home. For these tests, you will need to complete the directions you are given for collecting a sample at home. The tests detect blood cells in the stool that can indicate polyps or cancer or abnormal DNA depending on the test you use. If the results are normal, this test should be done every 1-3 years. If abnormal, a colonoscopy is needed.



Risk Factors



Colorectal cancer affects both men and women. There are some risk factors that we can control and some that we cannot. Here are some of the risk factors:

- Family history of colorectal cancer
- Smoking
- Obesity
- Lack of physical activity
- High red meat diets
- Diabetes type 2
- Being 45 or older

Signs and Symptoms

Often, there are little to NO symptoms. Some symptoms that may occur are:

- A change in bowel habits, such as diarrhea, constipation, or narrowing of the stool, that lasts more than a few days
- A feeling of needing to have a bowel movement that is not relieved
- Rectal bleeding with bright red blood
- Blood in the stool, which could make the stool look dark brown or black
- Cramps or abdominal (stomach) pain
- Weakness and fatigue
- Unintentional weight loss

