

MARCH 2024

COLORECTAL CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

Weekly Topic Briefer

WHAT IS CRC?

- The colon is the large intestine
- The rectum connects the colon to the anus and holds waste until it is eliminated from the body
- Cancer that begins in the colon or rectum is called Colorectal Cancer (CRC)
- CRC usually begins as a small growth or polyp in the lining of the colon or rectum
- Overtime these polyps can develop into cancer
- Many people with polyps or CRC do NOT experience any symptoms

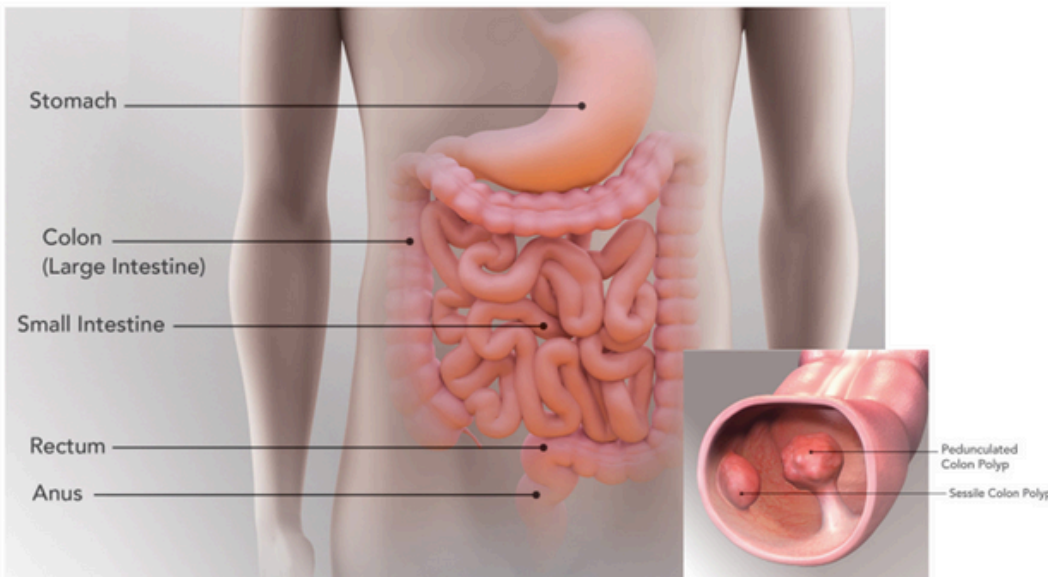


Image sourced from CDC Fact Sheet

ANYONE CAN GET IT

1. Men = 41.5 per 100,000
2. Women = 31.2 per 100,000
3. Compared to Whites (35.7 per 100,000), we see a higher number of cases among:
4. Alaska Natives (88.5 per 100,000)
5. American Indians (46.0 per 100,000)
6. Black/African Americans (41.7 per 100,000)

Facts and Figures

- CRC is the 2nd leading cause of cancer death in the US in both men and women combined (ACS)
- Besides skin cancer, CRC is the third most diagnosed cancer in both men and women. (ACS)
- Approximately 153,000 people are diagnosed with CRC in the US annually. (ACS)
- About 52,500 die annually from CRC in the US. (ACS)
- 1 in 3 adults (ages 45-75) are not getting screened as recommended (Fight CRC)



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THE NUMBER ONE SYMPTOM IS NO SYMPTOMS

But those who do experience symptoms may have:

1. Stomach pain, aches, or cramps that do not go away
2. Blood in the stool
3. A feeling that your bowel does not empty all the way
4. Changes in bowel habits or stool shape
5. Diarrhea or constipation
6. Stools that are narrower than usual
7. Feelings of being very tired or weak
8. Unexplained weight loss

However, any of these symptoms can be caused by other problems as well. If you have any signs and symptoms of CRC that don't go away or get worse, you should see a doctor to find out what's causing them.

COMMON RISK FACTORS

- Risk of CRC increases with age
- CRC is most common among adults aged 50 and older and those with a personal or family history of CRC or polyps
- History of inflammatory bowel disease (such as Crohn's or ulcerative colitis) increases your risk
- Several lifestyle factors increase risk:
 - Lack of regular physical activity
 - Diet low in fruits and vegetables
 - Low-fiber & high-fat diet
 - Being overweight or obese
 - Alcohol consumption
 - Tobacco use / cigarette smoking



Image sourced from GWU CRC Tool Awareness Campaign Materials

Click on the Links Below to Learn More

1. [American Cancer Society](#)
2. [American College of Gastroenterology](#)
3. [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)
4. [Colon Cancer Coalition](#)

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