

MARCH 2024

# COLORECTAL CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

## Weekly Topic Briefer

### LYNCH SYNDROME

Lynch Syndrome (previously referred to as hereditary nonpolyposis colorectal cancer, HNPCC) is an inherited disorder that increases the risk for colorectal, endometrial, and many other types of cancer. Lynch Syndrome is caused by autosomal dominantly inherited mutations in the mismatch repair (MMR) genes MLH1, MSH2, MSH6 and PMS2. Most individuals with Lynch Syndrome are undiagnosed.

Individuals with Lynch Syndrome have a significant increased risk of developing colorectal cancer. First-degree relatives of individuals identified with a Lynch Syndrome gene mutation also have a 50% chance to carry the mutation. It is crucial to identify patients with Lynch Syndrome and their relatives to allow them to take advantage of interventions that can significantly reduce their risk of cancer in the future.

#### Facts and Figures

- The lifetime risk for colorectal cancer for individuals with Lynch syndrome is 10-80%.
- By contrast, the lifetime risk for an individual without Lynch syndrome is 5.5%.
- The risk for a second primary colorectal cancer is 15%-20% at 10 years.
- Females with Lynch Syndrome also have a 28%- 60% lifetime risk for endometrial cancer.
- It is estimated that there are over 25,000 undiagnosed individuals in Washington State with Lynch Syndrome. It is estimated that 1 in 279 individuals has Lynch syndrome but over 98% are undiagnosed.

Identifying these undiagnosed individuals has the potential to reduce rates of morbidity and mortality from colorectal cancer.

#### SIGNS OF CANCER SYNDROMES

- Multiple family members with the same type of cancer
- Stories about cancer running in the family
- Family members developed cancer at a young age
- Family members with more than one type of cancer

#### WHAT IF I HAVE A CANCER SYNDROME?

- You may not have signs or symptoms, but you are at higher risk of developing certain types of cancer
- However, not everyone who inherits a cancer syndrome will develop cancer

#### UNDERSTAND & REDUCE YOUR RISK

If cancer runs in your family:

- Collect your family history of cancer
- Talk to your doctor about it
- Encourage family members to talk to their doctors
- Talk to a genetic counselor about if genetic testing may be right for you
- Reduce your risk by getting screened for cancer

Image sourced from DOH Lynch Syndrome Infographic

## CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC DIVERSE MATERIALS

Certain communities experience disparities in CRC screening, incidence, mortality, and survival. Cancer health disparities are complex and affected by various factors, such as social determinants of health, behavior, biology, genetics, and more. Communication-related issues may play a role in cancer disparities. Health Care providers, community based organizations, local leaders, and others working on outreach should utilize cultural and linguistically diverse materials. Below is a list of some available resources:

- Library Of Educational Materials in many languages including Spanish, French, Arabic, Korean, Somali, Vietnamese and more. Including Brochures, Information Cards/Graphics, and Flyers.
  - [Informational Materials – Colon Cancer Coalition](#)
- CRC Awareness Materials for LGBT+ Communities
  - [Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month Graphics - National LGBT Cancer Network \(cancer-network.org\)](#)
- Cancer Information in many languages including Spanish, French, Chinese, Arabic, Russian, Korean, and more.
  - [Cancer Information in Other Languages | American Cancer Society](#)
- Colorectal Cancer Print Materials in Spanish
  - [Colorectal Cancer Print Materials | CDC](#)
- End Colon Cancer in Indian Country
  - [Colon Cancer Screening at American Indian Cancer Foundation](#)
- Colorectal Cancer Screening in American Indian and Alaska Native Communities
  - [Colorectal Cancer Screening In American Indian & Alaska Native Communities - November 28, 2017 - American Cancer Society National Colorectal Cancer Roundtable \(nccrt.org\)](#)
- Diverse messaging (in English), graphics, social media posts, and communication plans for diverse audiences.
  - [Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month Campaign | School of Medicine and Health Sciences \(gwu.edu\)](#)



### Other Resources from this Week's Campaign Blast

- [Family Cancer Syndromes](#)
- [Cancer Family History Infographic](#)
- [Recent Progress in Lynch Syndrome and Other Familial Colorectal Cancer Syndromes](#)
- [The Search for Unaffected Individuals with Lynch Syndrome: Do the Ends Justify the Means?](#)