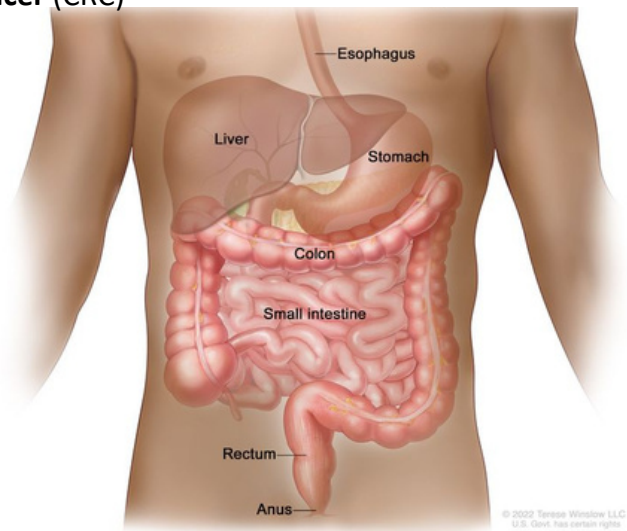


COLORECTAL CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

Weekly Topic Briefer

WHAT IS COLRECTAL CANCER (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)**



Source: [National Cancer Institute](#)

HOW DOES IT DEVELOP?

- CRC usually begins as a small **growth** or **polyp** in the lining of the **colon** or **rectum**
- Over time these **polyps** can develop into **cancer**
- Many people with polyps or CRC do **NOT** experience any symptoms
- When a **polyp** (noncancerous growth in the lining of the **colon** or **rectum**) progresses to cancer, it usually grows into the wall of the **colon** or **rectum**, where it may invade blood or lymph nodes.
- The extent to which cancer has spread at the time of the diagnosis is described as its **stage**.
- **Stages** according to the **Surveillance, Epidemiology and End Results (SEER)** summary system are:
 - **Localized**, grown into the wall of the **colon** or **rectum** but not into nearby tissue.
 - **Regional**, spread through the wall of the **colon** or **rectum** and **invading** nearby **tissues** or **lymph nodes**.
 - **Distant**, spread to other parts of the body (e.g. liver or lung)

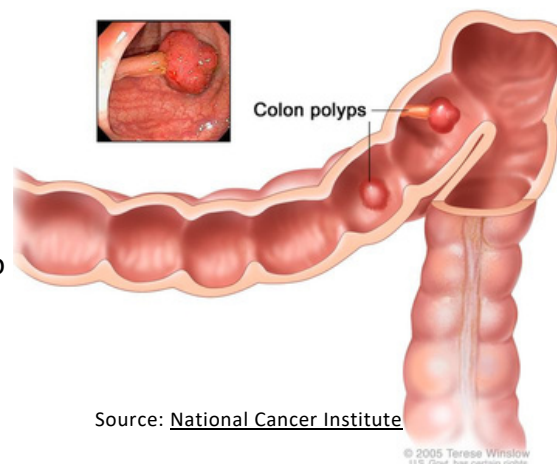
Facts and Figures

- CRC is the **2nd** leading cause of cancer death in the US in both men and women combined ([ACS](#))
- Approximately 153,000 people are diagnosed with CRC in the US annually. ([ACS](#))
- About 52,500 people die annually from CRC in the US. ([ACS](#))

Anyone can get it!

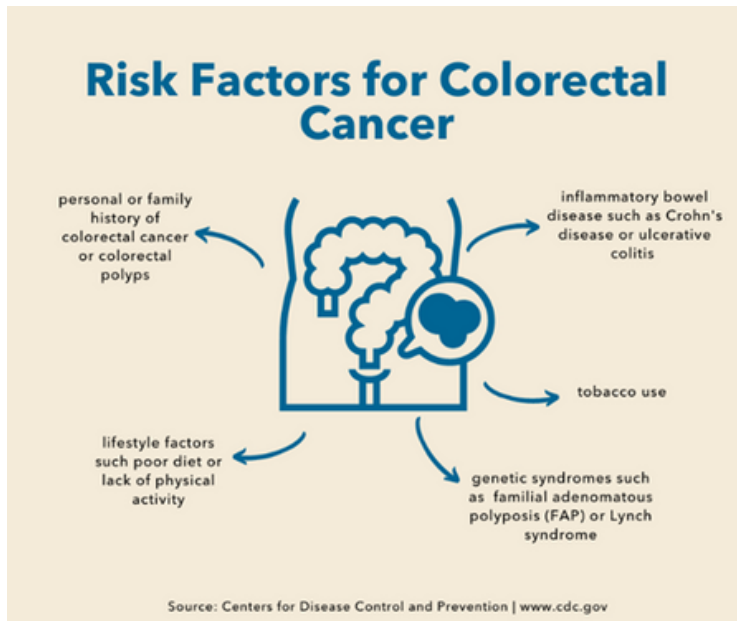
- Men: About 42 new cases per 100,000
- Women: About 31 new cases per 100,000
- Compared to White Americans (about 36 cases per 100,000), we see a higher number of cases among:
 - Alaska Natives (about 89 new cases per 100,000)
 - American Indians (46 new cases per 100,000)
 - Black/African Americans (about 42 new cases per 100,000)

(Data Source: [ACS CRC Facts & Figures 2023-2025.](#))



Source: [National Cancer Institute](#)

WHAT ARE THE COMMON RISK FACTORS?



- Risk of CRC increases with **age**
- CRC is most common among adults aged **45 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**
 - **Low** amounts of **fruits** and **vegetables** in your meals
 - **Low-fiber & high-fat** diet
 - Being **overweight** or obese
 - **Alcohol** consumption
 - Commercial **Tobacco** use / cigarette smoking

People with average risk and no family history should begin CRC screening at the age of 45.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

The Number One Symptom is No Symptoms!

But those who do experience symptoms may have:

- **Stomach pain**, aches, or cramps that do not go away
- **Blood in the stool**
- A feeling that your bowel does not empty all the way
- **Changes** in **bowel habits** or stool shape
- **Diarrhea** or **constipation**
- Stools that are narrower than usual
- Feelings of being very tired or weak
- Unexplained weight loss

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.



Click on the Resources Below to Learn More

1. [American Cancer Society\(ACS\)](#)
2. [American College of Gastroenterology](#)
3. [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)
4. [Colon Cancer Coalition](#)
5. [National Cancer Institute](#)
6. [State Cancer Profiles](#)

If you would like to unsubscribe from this content, please respond to this email with "unsubscribe."



Northwest CRC Task Force