

COLORECTAL CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

CAUSES, RISK FACTORS, and PREVENTION

Resources by Partners

- [American Cancer Society](#)
 - [NCCRT](#)
 - [CDC](#)
- [WAportal.org](#)

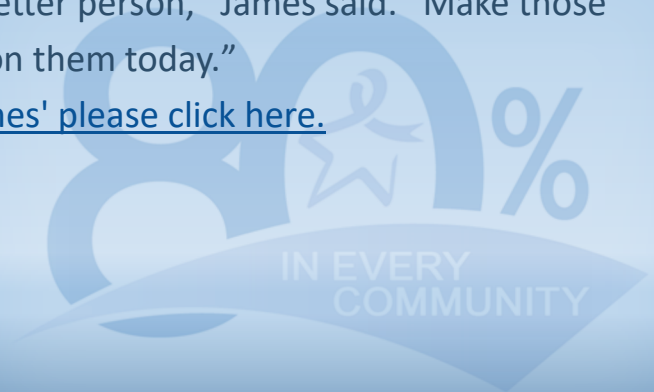
Resources by Type

- [Social Media/Graphics/Videos](#)
 - [Toolkits](#)
 - [ACS Statistics](#)
 - [CDC Statistics](#)

"The cure rate with surgery alone is close to 60 percent" - James, Seattle, WA.

"James had struggled for years with mysterious stomach issues. Doctors repeatedly told him the problem was gas. The results of his routine colonoscopies always came back normal. It wasn't until he doubled over in pain during a meeting that a trip to the emergency room changed his life. James demanded a magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scan, and the results indicated a growth on his colon. He was diagnosed with stage IIIB colon cancer in June 2012 and found himself prepping for surgery three days later. James said it's important to take time for yourself, especially in the hectic world of being treated for cancer. "You have to get still, quiet, and in tune with who you are." His cancer journey has helped him realize what is really important in life. "My advice to others: Don't wait to make life-changing decisions to eat healthier, spend more time with those who are important to you, or be a better person," James said. "Make those decisions and act on them today."

[For more stories like James' please click here.](#)



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Risk Factors You CAN Change...

Many lifestyle-related factors have been linked to colorectal cancer. In fact, the links between diet, weight, and exercise and colorectal cancer risk are some of the strongest for any type of cancer.

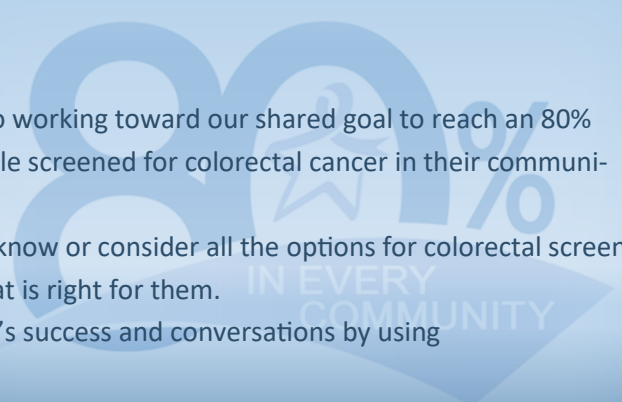
- If you are overweight or obese (very overweight), your risk of developing and dying from colorectal cancer is higher. Being overweight (especially having a larger waistline) raises the risk of colon and rectal cancer in both men and women, but the link seems to be stronger in men.
- If you're not physically active, you have a greater chance of developing colon cancer. Being more active can help lower your risk.
- People who have smoked tobacco for a long time are more likely than non-smokers to develop and die from colorectal cancer. Smoking is a well-known cause of lung cancer, but it's linked to a lot of other cancers, too. If you smoke and want to know more about quitting, see our [Guide to Quitting Smoking](#).
- Colorectal cancer has been linked to moderate to heavy alcohol use. Limiting alcohol use to no more than 2 drinks a day for men and 1 drink a day for women could have many health benefits, including a lower risk of many kinds of cancer.

Risk Factors You CAN'T Change...

- Being older
- A personal history of colorectal polyps or colorectal cancer
- A personal history of inflammatory bowel disease
- A family history of colorectal cancer or adenomatous polyps
- Having an inherited syndrome
- Lynch syndrome (hereditary non-polyposis colon cancer or HNPCC)
- Familial adenomatous polyposis (FAP)
- Rare inherited syndromes linked to colorectal cancer
- Your racial and ethnic background
- Having type 2 diabetes

What Can You Do?

- **Take the pledge:** Join the 1,700+ organizations committed to working toward our shared goal to reach an 80% screening rate nationwide by increasing the number of people screened for colorectal cancer in their communities.
- **Spread the word:** Many patients and providers either don't know or consider all the options for colorectal screening. Your voice can help connect them to a testing option that is right for them.
- **Join the conversation:** Keep us informed of your community's success and conversations by using #80inEveryCommunity on social media.



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Prevention

Screening:

The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force [recommends](#) that adults age 50 to 75 be screened for colorectal cancer. The decision to be screened after age 75 should be made on an individual basis. If you are older than 75, ask your doctor if you should be screened. People at an [increased risk](#) of getting colorectal cancer should talk to their doctor about when to begin screening, which test is right for them, and how often to get tested.

Several screening tests can be used to find polyps or colorectal cancer. [Talk to your doctor](#) about which test is right for you.

- Stool Tests
- Flexible Sigmoidoscopy
- Colonoscopy
- CT Colonography (Virtual Colonoscopy)

[Find more about CRC Screening Tests by clicking here.](#)

If you have a strong family history of colorectal polyps or cancer, talk with your doctor about your risk. You might benefit from [genetic counseling](#) to review your family medical tree to see how likely it is that you have a [family cancer syndrome](#).

Other Prevention:

You might be able to lower your risk of colorectal cancer by managing some of the [risk factors that you can control](#), like diet and physical activity.

- **Weight:** Being overweight or obese increases the risk of colorectal cancer in both men and women, but the link seems to be stronger in men. Having more belly fat (that is, a larger waistline) has also been linked to colorectal cancer. **Staying at a healthy weight and avoiding weight gain around the midsection may help lower your risk.**
- **Physical activity:** Increasing your level of activity lowers your risk of colorectal cancer and polyps. Regular moderate activity (doing things that make you breathe as hard as you would during a brisk walk) lowers the risk, but vigorous activity might have an even greater benefit. **Increasing the intensity and amount of your physical activity may help reduce your risk.**
- **Diet:** Overall, diets that are high in vegetables, fruits, and whole grains (and low in red and processed meats) have been linked with lower colorectal cancer risk, although it's not exactly clear which factors are important. Many studies have found a link between red meats (beef, pork, and lamb) or processed meats (such as hot dogs, sausage, and lunch meats) and increased colorectal cancer risk. **Limiting red and processed meats and eating more vegetables and fruits may help lower your risk.**

[For more tips on how to prevent Colon Cancer please click here.](#)

There's no sure way to prevent colorectal cancer. But there are things you can do that might help lower your risk, such as changing the [risk factors](#) that you can control.

