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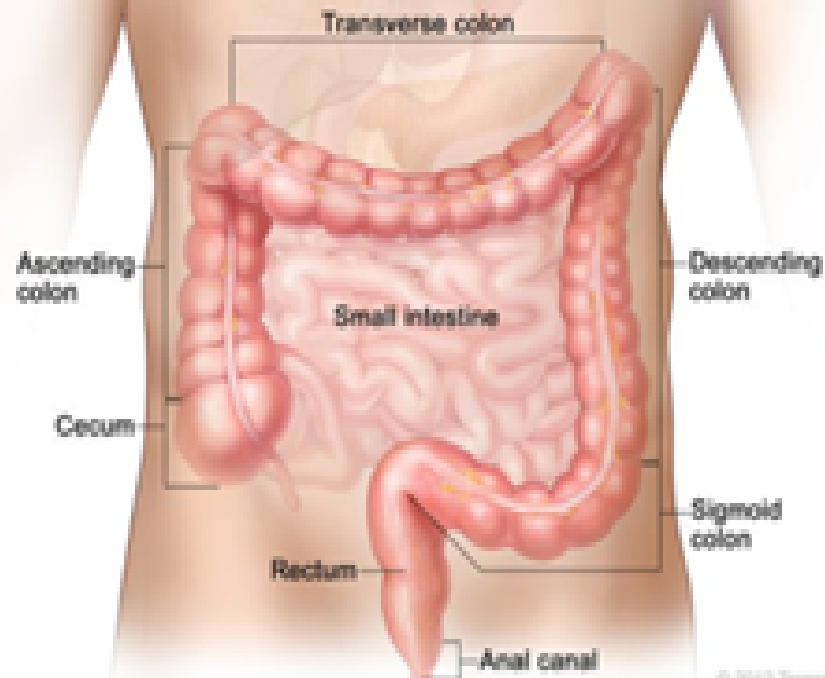
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What is Colon Cancer

Colon cancer is a cancer that develops in your intestines.

- Colorectal cancer (Colon Cancer) is a disease in which cells in the colon or rectum grow out of control.
- Most colon cancers begin as precancerous polyps (abnormal growths) in the colon or rectum. These polyps can be present in the colon for years before they may develop into cancer.
 - o The colon is the first and longest part of your large intestines. It helps to absorb water and nutrients from your food.
 - o The sigmoid colon, which connects to the rectum continues to remove waste from your body.
 - o The rectum is the lower part of your large intestine and where your body stores your stool.

What is Colon Cancer



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How Common is Colon Cancer

Colon cancer is **the third most common cancer** diagnosed in both men and women in the United States.

The **third leading cause of cancer-related deaths**.

- In 2023, the estimated the number of colon cancers in the United States were:
 - 106,970 new cases of colon cancer
 - 46,050 new cases of rectal cancer
- During 2023 it was expected that about 52,550 deaths would be due to colon cancer.
- In 2023, in PA there was an estimated 6,610 new colon cancer cases and 2,280 deaths due to colon cancer.

(American Cancer Society)



Colon Cancer Risks Factors

The risk of getting colon cancer increases as you get older. But other risks and lifestyle factors which may also increase your chance of developing colon cancer, include:

- You are over the age of 50
- You have a history of inflammatory bowel disease such as Crohn's disease or ulcerative colitis.
- You have a personal or family history of colorectal cancer or polyps.
- You have a hereditary syndrome such as Familial Adenomatous Polyposis (FAP), Non-polyposis Colon Cancer (Lynch syndrome), Gardner Syndrome, or Peutz-Jeghers syndrome.
- You have a history of other types of cancer, including uterine and ovarian cancer
- You don't have enough regular physical activity.
- You eat a diet low in fruit and vegetables, A low-fiber and high-fat diet, or a diet high in processed meats.
- You are overweight (obese).
- You have a history of alcohol consumption and Tobacco use.
- You have a history of adenomas (colon polyps or growths)
 - ***Adenomas are not cancer, but they can sometimes turn into cancer over time.***

Colon Cancer Symptoms

Early on colon cancer may not cause any symptoms, especially at first.

Some symptoms of colon cancer may include:

- If you have a change in bowel habits, which last more than a few days, such as:
 - Diarrhea
 - Constipation,
 - Narrowing of the stool.
- If you have Blood (either bright red or very dark) in the stool (bowel movement)
- If you have diarrhea, constipation, or feeling that the bowel does not empty all the way
- If you have a lump or swelling in the abdomen
- If you have abdominal pains, aches, or cramping
- If you have vomiting
- If you notice weight loss for no known reason
- If you have fatigue and weakness



If you have symptoms that could be caused by colon cancer, talk to your doctor. Your doctor will decide which screening method would be right for you.

Colon Cancer Prevention & Screening

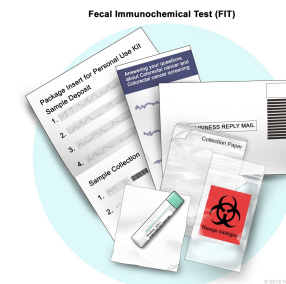


Often colon cancer does not cause symptoms until it has grown or spread. Colorectal cancer that is found early through screening, before you have symptoms, might be easier to treat.

Diagnosing colon cancer begins with a Physical exam, medical history, and blood samples performed by your doctor.

Additional colon cancer screening methods may include:

- A digital rectal exam (DRE) during your physical exam
- Fecal occult blood test (FOBT).
- Sigmoidoscopy or Colonoscopy (detects polyps in the lining of the colon/rectum and remove them before they become cancerous)
- Biopsy, which can include:
 - Gene and protein tests (KRAS, BRAF, MMR and MSI) to determine if targeted therapy or immunotherapy might help
- CT colonography
- Ultrasound
- Stool DNA (DNA) with FIT test

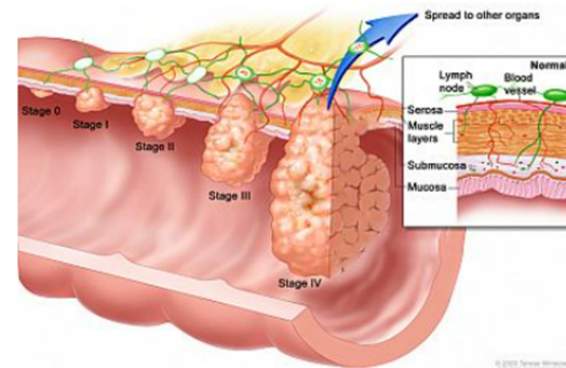


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Colon Cancer Prevention & Screening

But the most effective way to reduce your risk of colon cancer, beginning at age 45, is to get screened.

- Screening can often find colon cancer early, when it's small, hasn't spread, and might be easier to treat.
- Regular screening can even prevent colon cancer.
- **A polyp can take as many as 10 to 15 years to develop into cancer.** With screening, doctors can find and remove polyps before they have the chance to turn into cancer.



Stages of colorectal cancer. NCI, NIH

Types of colon cancer: After someone is diagnosed with colon cancer, doctors will determine the type of cancer and determine if it has spread.

- Most colon cancers start in the cells that make mucus which helps to lubricate the inside of the colon and rectum. These cancers are called adenocarcinomas.
- Other, less common types of colon and rectum tumors include:
 - Carcinoid tumors
 - Gastrointestinal stromal tumors (GISTs)
 - Lymphomas
 - Sarcomas

Tumor staging is the process used by doctors to determine how much cancer there is, how serious it is, and how best to treat it.

- During the discussion with your doctor, they may relay several important pieces of information regarding what stage your tumor is:
 - How large the tumor is and how much it has grown
 - If the cancer has grown large enough to spread nearby in your body
 - If the cancer has spread to other parts of your body

Types of Colon Cancer & Management

Cancer staging and treatments can be complex, so when deciding on a treatment plan it is important to have an honest, open discussion with your doctor so you can have answers to your questions, such as:

- Where is the cancer located?
- What is the cancer's stage, and what does that mean?
- What treatment options are there?
- What are the risks or side effects of the treatments?
- What should you I do to be ready for treatment?
- What would the goal of the treatment be?



If at any point you are not sure you are understanding what your doctor is saying, ask them to explain it in a way that you understand it.

Colon Cancer Health Resources

PHW colon cancer programs:

To learn more about PHW's participant Colon Cancer Screening incentives and one of the 'Myhealthpays' programs or make a referral:

- PAHealthWellness.com Website: <https://www.pahealthwellness.com/>
- Call participant services: 1-844-626-6813 (TTY:711)
- Email: phwcasemanagement@pahealthwellness.com

Other resources available on the internet:

American Cancer Society (ACS):

- ACS Website: <https://www.cancer.org/>
- Phone: 800-227-2345

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):

- CDC Website: <https://www.cdc.gov/cancer/colorectal/index.htm>
- Phone: 800-232-4636



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