

# March Is Colorectal Cancer Screening Awareness Month



What is Colorectal Cancer? Colorectal Cancer is cancer that occurs in the colon (also known as the large intestine or large bowel) and/or rectum (the passageway that connects the colon to the anus).

- Colorectal cancers affect both men and women.
- It is the second leading cause of cancer deaths in the United States.
- Every year about 140,000 Americans are diagnosed with colorectal cancer
- Each year in the United States, more than 50,000 people die from Colorectal Cancer
- More than 90% of colorectal cancers occur in people aged 50 or older.
- Colorectal Cancer is highly **Preventable** with proper screening.

As colorectal cancer risk increases with age, screening generally begins at age 50. About one third of American over the age of 50 have not been screened as recommended.

Screening tests help prevent colorectal cancer by finding precancerous polyps (abnormal growths) before they become cancerous and detecting cancers earlier, when treatment is most effective.

Generally there are **NO** early signs or symptoms for colorectal cancer. Late signs and symptoms may include blood in the stool, aches, cramps or pain in the stomach, or unexplained weight loss. As these signs and symptoms may be caused by a number of other conditions you should discuss with your medical provider as soon as possible.

If you are at increased risk due to family history, inflammatory bowel disease, a genetic syndrome or hereditary non-polyposis colorectal cancer, talk with your medical provider, as you may need to start getting screened before the age of 50.

There are several different screening tests for colorectal cancer. You and your medical provider can decide which screening test(s) is best for you. Many insurance plans, including Medicaid and Medicare cover some or all of the screening costs. You can check with your insurance company by calling the telephone number on the back of your insurance card.

There is no single food or special diet that will prevent colorectal cancer. Research indicates that eating a nutritious diet, maintaining a healthy weight, and getting regular medical check-up including all recommended screening can reduce your risk.

There should be no excuses. If you're 50 or older, or are at increased risk, or my symptoms, talk with your medical provider about getting screened. Also, encourage those around you to get screened. You may be saving their life!

Resources used in the article include: [www.cdc.gov/cancer/colorectal](http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/colorectal), [www.cdc.gov/screenforlife](http://www.cdc.gov/screenforlife).

**Local Resource:** Your medical provider, your insurance company/Medicaid/Medicare, Washburn County Health Department, and The 2017 Source.