

Who Is Likely to Get Colorectal Cancer?

Colorectal cancer occurs more frequently in industrialized, Western societies.

It kills about 55,000 Americans each year.



Both men and women can get colorectal cancer.



It is most common in people who are 50 years old or older.

Doctors do not know exactly what causes colorectal cancer. However, there are some things that increase your risk.

Your risk increases if:

- You are 50 years old or older
- You or a family member had polyps or colorectal cancer before;
- You have chronic inflammation of the colon such as “Ulcerative Colitis”, “Crohn’s Disease” or “Irritable Bowel Syndrome”.

Some types of cancer of the ovary, uterus, or breast are hereditary. If you or someone in your family has had these cancers you may be at higher risk for colorectal cancer.

You are more likely to develop polyps or colorectal cancer if:

- Your diet is high in fat
- Your diet is low in fruits and vegetables
- You eat a lot of well-cooked, fried or barbequed meats
- You eat more than 2-3 servings of red meat per week. "Red" describes the type of animal meat, not whether it is rare or cooked. Lamb, pork and beef, cooked or uncooked are red meat.



- You smoke cigarettes,
- Drink more than one alcoholic drink per day
- Or if you don't exercise.

What Can You Do to Prevent It?

The most important thing you can do is to be tested for it on a regular basis when you are 50 years old and older.

Be tested at a younger age if you or a family member had polyps or colorectal cancer before; colon diseases such as “Ulcerative Colitis”, “Crohn’s Disease” or “Irritable Bowel Syndrome”; or hereditary kinds of cancer of the ovary, uterus, or breast. Ask your doctor at what age you need to be tested and which test is best for you.

People of all ages can do things to help prevent polyps and colorectal cancer:

- **Take a daily multivitamin with “folic acid” or “folate”.** Folic Acid is a “B” vitamin that is found



naturally in fruit, vegetable, and rice.



- **Exercise.** Try getting at least 30 minutes of physical activity everyday.

- **Eat less red meat, just 2-3 servings per week.** Red meat includes beef, pork and lamb.



- **Eat 5 or more servings of fruits and vegetables a day.**

- **Eat deep fried food less often, and eat less fatty foods.**



- **Quit smoking.**



- **Drink less than one alcoholic drink per day.**

Doing things to prevent colorectal cancer can protect you and your family against other diseases, too, like heart disease and diabetes. Follow your doctor's recommendations for staying healthy!

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