

Colon Cancer Screening Tests

Colonoscopy: Procedure using a colonoscope (a flexible lighted tube with a lens for viewing and a tool for removing tissue), which is inserted through the anus into the rectum. Air is then pumped into the colon to expand it, which allows the medical team to examine the colon lining. During this procedure, any abnormal growths in the entire colon and the rectum can be removed.

Sigmoidoscopy: Procedure using a sigmoidoscope (a flexible lighted tube with a lens for viewing and a tool for removing tissue), which is inserted through the anus into the rectum. Air is then pumped into the colon to expand it, which allows the medical team to examine the colon lining. During this procedure, abnormal growths in the rectum and sigmoid colon can be removed for further analysis.

Stool tests: Test that checks for small or trace amounts of blood in feces (stool) that cannot be detected with the naked eye. Blood in the stool may be a sign of colon cancer or other problems, such as polyps, ulcers, or hemorrhoids.

Video: [Research Advances in Colon Cancer Screening and Detection](#)

Video: [What Are Colon Cancer Screening Guidelines?](#)

Colon Cancer Risk Factors

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Older age ▪ Family history of colon cancer ▪ Certain inherited conditions (Lynch syndrome and familial adenomatous polyposis) ▪ History of inflammatory bowel diseases ▪ Racial and ethnic background* | <p>Other factors linked to increased risk include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Excessive alcohol use ▪ Obesity ▪ Sedentary lifestyle ▪ Smoking ▪ Possibly, poor dietary habits |
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*American Indian and Alaska Native people have the highest rates of colorectal cancer in the United States, followed by African American men and women.¹

Early Onset Colon Cancer Symptoms

- Blood in the stool or rectal bleeding
- Change in bowel habits (diarrhea, constipation)
- Thinner stool caliber
- Ongoing discomfort in the belly (cramps, gas or pain)
- A feeling of incomplete bowel movements
- Fatigue and weakness
- Unintentional weight loss

Colon Cancer Educational Resources

- American Cancer Society: [cancer.org](https://www.cancer.org)
- Colorectal Cancer Alliance: [colorectalcancer.org](https://www.colorectalcancer.org)
- Fight CRC: [fightcolorectalcaner.org](https://www.fightcolorectalcaner.org)
- Video: [What Can Patients Do to Access Better Colon Cancer Care?](#)
- Video: [What Is the Role of Genetic Testing in Colon Cancer Care?](#)

DETECT

[Detect Colon Cancer](#) is brought to you by the Patient Empowerment Network. It is sponsored by Merck and through generous donations from people like you.

www.powerfulpatients.org

¹ Colorectal cancer risk factors: Hereditary colorectal risk factors. Hereditary Colorectal Risk Factors | American Cancer Society. (n.d.). <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/types/colon-rectal-cancer/causes-risks-prevention/risk-factors.html>