

# Colorectal Cancer Awareness

March is Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month. This is a great time to learn more about the importance of colorectal health. Excluding some kinds of skin cancer, colorectal cancer is the fourth most common cancer that affects both men and women. It's also the fourth leading cause of cancer-related deaths in the U.S. (source: [CDC](#)). The good news is that colon cancer is more treatable, and sometimes curable, with early detection from screening. People aged 45 and up are now recommended to be screened.

There are many screening tests for colorectal cancers, such as the FIT test, Cologuard, and colonoscopy. Research shows that no one test is better than another at reducing the risk of dying from colorectal cancer. It's important to talk with your doctor to choose the best option for you. Your family history may help to determine what screening test is right for you and how often you need to be screened.

Learn more with the activities in this toolkit:

- **Dress in Blue Day**
- **Know the facts!**
- **Lower your risk**
- **Word search**



**Overall, the lifetime risk of developing colorectal cancer is about 1 in 23 (4.3%) for men and 1 in 25 (4.0%) for women** (Source: [ACS](#))

## Questions?

Email us at [Wellness@Medica.com](mailto:Wellness@Medica.com)



# Health disparities

Health disparities are preventable differences in health between groups of people due to race, ethnicity, gender, age, religion, education, economic status, where they live, disability, etc. Health disparities are a complicated and challenging problem around the world. The health of a community is shaped mostly by social factors. For example, having access to healthcare, a safe area to live, racial equity, healthy food, good education, and supportive relationships free of discrimination are all very important to overall health.

People who face health disparities often have a higher risk for colorectal cancer. In the U.S., certain racial and ethnic groups experience a higher risk of colorectal cancer. They are also more likely to be diagnosed after the disease has already advanced to the metastatic stage, meaning it has spread to other parts of the body.

## Did you know?

- Black/African Americans have a disproportionately high colorectal cancer rate. (Source: [American Cancer Society](#))
- Colorectal Cancer is the second most common cancer and the second leading cause of cancer death among Native Americans. (Source: [CDC](#))

For more information, please visit:

- [CDC: Colorectal Cancer](#)
- [Colorectal Cancer Alliance](#)
- [CDC: Informational Video](#)

# Dress in Blue Day

The first Friday in March is National Dress in Blue Day.

Wear blue on Friday, March 7, 2025, to show your support and raise awareness for colorectal cancer. Ask your coworkers, family, and friends to join you!



# Know the facts!

Learn more about colorectal cancer and know the facts. Talk to your doctor if you have any questions or concerns.

- Colorectal cancer is cancer of the colon or rectum, which are both parts of the large intestine.
- Colorectal cancer affects men and women of all racial and ethnic groups.
- Colorectal cancer is most common in people who are 45 years old or older.
- Polyps are small growths on the lining of the colon. Most polyps are harmless, but some can turn into cancer.
- Most polyps and early colorectal cancers don't cause symptoms at first, which is why screenings are so important.
- A colonoscopy can find and remove precancerous polyps/abnormal growths in the colon or rectum before they turn into cancer—and thereby prevent cancer.
- Symptoms may include blood in stool, ongoing stomach pain or cramps, and unexplained weight loss. If you have these symptoms, talk to your doctor right away.
- The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force recommends beginning screenings at age 45 for those at average risk. There are several screening options:
  - Stool-based methods like FIT testing or Cologuard are done at home without special preparation. These types of tests need to be repeated more often.
  - Colonoscopy requires preparation, including taking a laxative, and sedation for the procedure. If you're at average risk, and the result is normal, you won't need another colonoscopy for 10 years.
- Some people may need to start screening before age 45, especially if they have certain conditions or a family history of colorectal cancer. If you have conditions like inflammatory bowel disease, Crohn's disease, or certain genetic syndromes, such as Lynch syndrome, you might be at higher risk. Talk to your doctor to learn more.

## Lower your risk

The best way to lower your risk of colorectal cancer is to get screened regularly, starting at age 45. You can also lower your risk with healthy lifestyle choices.

- **Watch your weight:** Being obese or overweight increases your risk of colon or rectal cancer. Being active and eating a diet high in vegetables, fruits, and whole grains can help you manage your weight.
- **Eat lots of vegetables, fruits, and whole grains:** A diet rich in these foods has been linked to a decreased risk for colorectal cancer. On the other hand, eating too much red and processed meats (like hot dogs and deli meats) is linked to an increased risk for colorectal cancer.
- **Limit alcohol:** The American Cancer Society recommends that men limit themselves to two drinks a day and women to one. One drink is 12 ounces of beer, 5 ounces of wine, or 1 ½ ounces of liquor.
- **Move your body:** If you aren't physically active, your risk for colorectal cancer may be higher. Some studies show that being physically active may help lower your risk.
- **Don't smoke:** Long-term smoking raises your chances of developing and dying from colon or rectal cancer.

# Word search

Words can be found in any direction (including diagonals) and can overlap each other. Use the list of words below.

X W A C F Y D V M P F U E C N L S I V C  
D S K J X O Q R V I L O C T O R Z U B I  
H C D V X Y S G T A P R E V A L E N T N  
F R W H F T N T T K R E C T U M O S V T  
B E J A S Z E C A D A V Y M Y G M N Y E  
D E U B Z S E Z V R T I I Y N Q N P F S  
P N W X T R P E C N P N R E C N A C T T  
S I W I O A J P G O V S L G O Y I P H I  
W N N L F B J X E B L O L G O O Y T B N  
T G O P R E V E N T K O D Y I L L Q Y E  
J C Q T W K B N E I M A G J Y A L F P E  
Z A Z Y S Y R O T S I H W U E E C Z O K  
A G G I G K H E I D H J E H A H N V C J  
S F R I Q H D G C L M A Z S C R Y D S T  
P I F D J O J R W L J N H Z N A D Q O Y  
Y W L E U O X Y R A T I D E R E H H N K  
L Q Q K C Z G H G N I Y R C S A F H O F  
O L H T M T T Q M T N D H Y M M E Z L B  
P Q Q Z T W S Y M P T O M S Y P X G O Z  
C R W V H Z Y R O T A M M A L F N I C B

colorectal  
cancer  
colon  
rectum  
intestine

affects  
prevalent  
polyps  
symptoms  
risk

screening  
FIT testing  
Cologuard  
colonoscopy  
history

health  
inflammatory  
genetic  
hereditary  
prevent

# Resources

Health Promotion has many tools and resources to help you adopt a healthier lifestyle and lower your risk of developing cancer.

- [Nicotine cessation](#): Get help quitting or reducing your nicotine use (e.g., cigarettes, smokeless, and vaping)
- [REAL goals](#): Preset goals and education on specific topics within the eight dimensions of wellness. (e.g., reducing alcohol use, eating better, increasing movement, reducing isolation, self-care, mindfulness)
- [Events](#): Look for upcoming programs to help you adopt a healthy lifestyle to lower your risk.
- [Nutrition](#): Access WebMD resources\*, webinars, and a monthly newsletter with recipes and tips.

*\*Resources are available to everyone, regardless of insurance, unless otherwise noted*

## Answer Key – Word Search

X	W	A	C	F	Y	D	V	M	P	F	U	E	C	N	L	S	I	V	C
D	S	K	J	X	O	Q	R	V	I	L	O	C	T	O	R	Z	U	B	I
H	C	D	V	X	Y	S	G	T	A	P	R	E	V	A	L	E	N	T	N
F	R	W	H	F	T	N	T	T	K	R	E	C	T	U	M	O	S	V	T
B	E	J	A	S	Z	E	C	A	D	A	V	Y	M	Y	G	M	N	Y	E
D	E	U	B	Z	S	E	Z	V	R	T	I	I	Y	N	Q	N	P	F	S
P	N	W	X	T	R	P	E	C	N	P	N	R	E	C	N	A	C	T	T
S	I	W	I	O	A	J	P	G	O	V	S	L	G	O	Y	I	P	H	I
W	N	N	L	F	B	J	X	E	B	L	O	L	G	O	O	Y	T	B	N
T	G	O	P	R	E	V	E	N	T	K	O	D	Y	I	L	L	Q	Y	E
J	C	Q	T	W	K	B	N	E	I	M	A	G	J	Y	A	L	F	P	E
Z	A	Z	Y	S	Y	R	O	T	S	I	H	W	U	E	E	C	Z	O	K
A	G	G	I	G	K	H	E	I	D	H	J	E	H	A	H	N	V	C	J
S	F	R	I	Q	H	D	G	C	L	M	A	Z	S	C	R	Y	D	S	T
P	I	F	D	J	O	J	R	W	L	J	N	H	Z	N	A	D	Q	O	Y
Y	W	L	E	U	O	X	Y	R	A	T	I	D	E	R	E	H	H	N	K
L	Q	Q	K	C	Z	G	H	G	N	I	Y	R	C	S	A	F	H	O	F
O	L	H	T	M	T	Q	M	T	N	D	H	Y	M	M	E	Z	L	B	
P	Q	Q	Z	T	W	S	Y	M	P	T	O	M	S	Y	P	X	G	O	Z
C	R	W	V	H	Z	Y	R	O	T	A	M	M	A	L	F	N	I	C	B