



March Yelm Family Medicine Patient Newsletter



Committed to your health and our community

National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month

What is colorectal cancer?

Colorectal cancer is a cancer that starts in the colon or the rectum. These cancers can also be named colon cancer or rectal cancer, depending on where they start. Colon cancer and rectal cancer are often grouped together because they have many features in common.

Cancer starts when cells in the body begin to grow out of control. Cells in nearly any part of the body can become cancer, and can spread to other areas of the body. To learn more about how cancers start and spread, see [What Is Cancer?](#)

How does colorectal cancer start?

Most colorectal cancers begin as a growth on the inner lining of the colon or rectum called a *polyp*. Some types of polyps can change into cancer over the course of several years, but not all polyps become cancer. The chance of changing into a cancer depends on the kind of polyp. The 2 main types of polyps are:

Adenomatous polyps (adenomas): These polyps sometimes change into cancer. Because of this, adenomas are called a *pre-cancerous condition*.

Hyperplastic polyps and inflammatory polyps:

These polyps are more common, but in general they are not pre-cancerous.

Dysplasia, another pre-cancerous condition, is an area in a polyp or in the lining of the colon or rectum where the cells look abnormal (but not like true cancer cells).

For more detailed information on the types of polyps and conditions that can lead to colorectal cancer, see [Understanding Your Pathology Report: Colon Polyps](#)

If cancer forms in a polyp, it can eventually begin to grow into the wall of the colon or rectum.

The wall of the colon and rectum is made up of several layers. Colorectal cancer starts in the innermost layer (the mucosa) and can grow through some or

In This Issue



Things to do for the Month of March

Donut Dash 5K & Kid's 1 Mile @ Hands On Children's Museum
Mar 13 @ 8:45 am

Friendship Run 2016 @ Westside Cooperative Preschool
Mar 13 @ 8:55 am

Easter Egg Hunt @ Lattin's Country Cider Mill on March 26th starts @ 1:00pm

Eagles Easter Egg Hunt @ Priest Point Park Mar 27 @ 2:00 pm Special needs @ 12

All of the other layers. When cancer cells are in the wall, they can then grow into blood vessels or lymph vessels (tiny channels that carry away waste and fluid). From there, they can travel to nearby lymph nodes or to distant parts of the body.

The stage (extent of spread) of a colorectal cancer depends on how deeply it grows into the wall and if it has spread outside the colon or rectum. For more information on staging, see "Colorectal cancer stages"

Colorectal cancer risk factors

A risk factor is anything that affects your chance of getting a disease such as cancer. Different cancers have different risk factors. Some risk factors, like smoking, can be changed. Others, like a person's age or family history, can't be changed.

But having a risk factor, or even many, does not mean that you will get the disease. And some people who get the disease may not have any known risk factors.

Researchers have found several risk factors that might increase a person's chance of developing colorectal polyps or colorectal cancer.

Colorectal cancer risk factors you can change

Several lifestyle-related factors have been linked to colorectal cancer. In fact, the links between diet, weight, and exercise and colorectal cancer risk are some of the strongest for any type of cancer.

Being overweight or obese

If you are overweight or obese ([very overweight](#)), your risk of developing and dying from colorectal cancer is higher. Being overweight raises the risk of colon cancer in both men and women, but the link seems to be stronger in men.

Physical inactivity

If you are not physically active, you have a greater chance of developing

colorectal cancer. Being more active might help lower your risk.

Certain types of diets

A diet that is high in red meats (such as beef, pork, lamb, or liver) and processed meats (such as hot dogs and some luncheon meats) can raise your colorectal cancer risk.

Cooking meats at very high temperatures (frying, broiling, or grilling) creates chemicals that might raise your cancer risk, but it's not clear how much this might increase your colorectal cancer risk.

Diets high in vegetables, fruits, and whole grains have been linked with a **lower** risk of colorectal cancer, but fiber supplements have not been shown to help.

It's not clear if other dietary components (for example, certain types of fats) affect colorectal cancer risk.

Smoking

People who have smoked for a long time are more likely than non-smokers to develop and die from colorectal cancer. [Smoking](#) is a well-known cause of lung cancer, but it is also linked to other cancers, like colorectal cancer. If you smoke and want to know more about quitting, see [Guide to Quitting Smoking](#).

Heavy alcohol use

Colorectal cancer has been linked to heavy [alcohol](#) use. Limiting alcohol use to no more than 2 drinks a day for men and 1 drink a day for women could have many health benefits, including a lower risk of colorectal cancer.

For Colorectal cancer risk factors you cannot change

And

Prevention please go to:

<http://www.cancer.org/cancer/colorectal-cancer/detailedguide/colorectal-cancer-risk-factors>

