



Protect yourself

Healthy habits can help lower your risk for colorectal cancer



Over our lifetimes, about one in 20 of us will develop colon cancer, also called colorectal cancer.¹ When it is caught early, survival rates are better than 60%.² That's why regular screenings are so important.

Your colon is part of your large intestine. Most of the time, colon cancer starts as a growth called a polyp inside the colon or rectum.³

Although there are some risk factors you can't control, like your age, medical history or heritage, there are other things you can do to lower your risk for colon cancer.⁴ Let's take a look.

- **Eat a plant-based diet.** A diet high in vegetables, fruits and whole grains lowers your risk of colorectal cancer. Eating a lot of red meat or processed meat raises your risk.
- **Get moving.** An active lifestyle reduces your risk.
- **Stay at a healthy weight.** Being very overweight or obese increases the risk of colon cancer, especially in men.
- **Limit alcohol.** Heavy drinking has been linked to colorectal cancer. Have no more than one (for women) or two (for men) drinks a day.
- **Stay away from cigarettes.** Smoking makes you more likely to develop colorectal cancer. If you smoke, talk to your doctor about quitting.

Talk to your doctor; the most important thing you can do to prevent colon cancer is to get screened.



1 American Cancer Society: *What are the key statistics about colorectal cancer?* (accessed June 2018): cancer.org.

2 Fight Colorectal Cancer: *Facts and stats* (accessed June 2018): fightcolorectalcancer.org.

3 American Society of Colon & Rectal Surgeons: *The colon: What it is, what it does, why it is important* (accessed June 2018): fascrs.org.

4 American Cancer Society: *Six Ways to Lower Your Risk for Colorectal Cancer* (accessed June 2018): cancer.org.

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