

Colon Cancer Awareness Month

March 2026



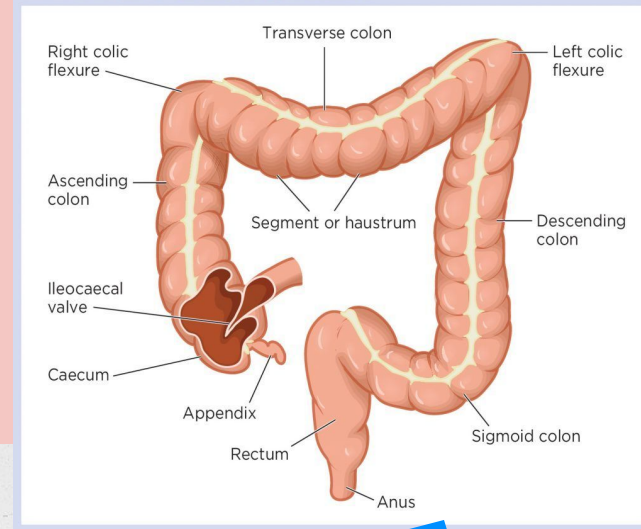
 publicdomainvectors.org

Education and Prevention

Colorectal Cancer Statistics in Maryland

- Colorectal cancer is the 2nd leading cause of death in the U.S, accounting for 9% of all cancer deaths in Maryland.
- It is the 3rd leading cause of cancer deaths among women in Maryland.
- Among Maryland men, it is also the 3rd leading cause of cancer deaths.
- In 2018, 72.5% of Maryland adults aged 50 to 75 years reported being up-to-date with their colorectal screenings which surpassed the Healthy People 2020 target of 70.5%.
- According to the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) at the University of Chicago, 47.2% of diagnosed colorectal cancer in Maryland are detected by screening.
- From 2014-2018, Maryland had the 26th highest colorectal cancer mortality rate among the states and Washington D.C.

Fig 1. Anatomy of the large intestine



Fun Fact:

The Affordable Care Act (ACA) requires both private insurers and Medicare to cover the costs of all colorectal cancer screening tests

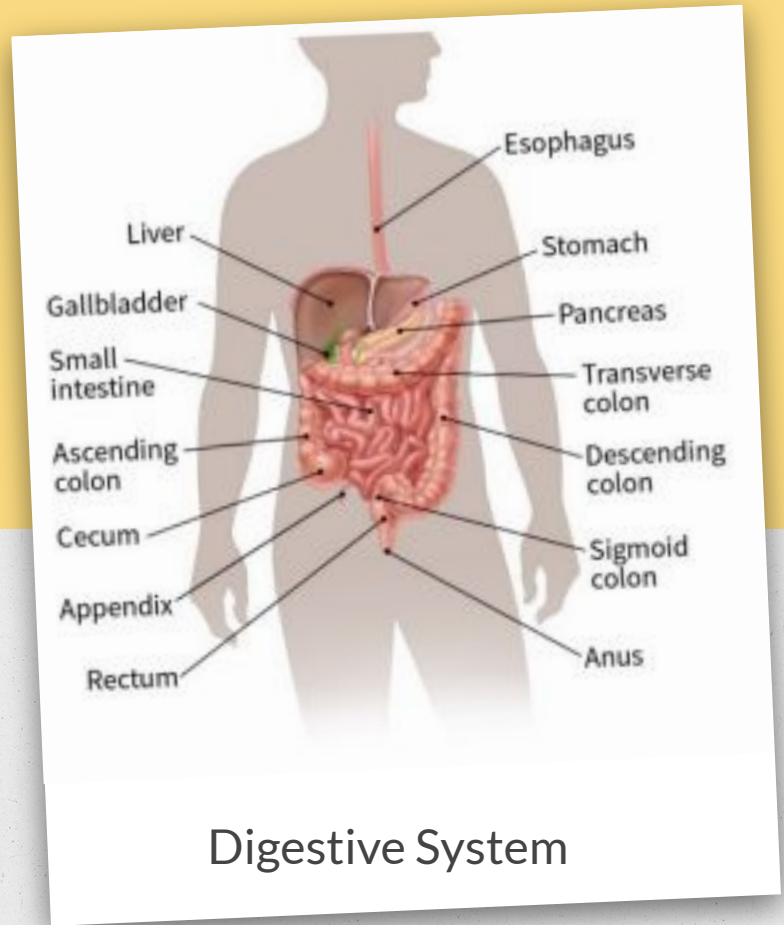
What Is Colorectal Cancer?

Colorectal cancer is a disease in which cells in the colon or rectum grow out of control. The colon is the large intestine or large bowel. The rectum is the passageway that connects the colon to the anus.

Fun Fact:

Large intestine aka colon consists of:

1. Anal canal
2. Rectum
3. Sigmoid colon
4. Descending colon
5. Transverse colon
6. Ascending colon



Who Should Get Screened?



Colorectal cancer screening
can save your life.

www.cdc.gov



Fun Fact:

Screening use to
start at age 50.
That
recommendation
changed in 2021

- The United States Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) sets recommendations.
- Adults aged 45 to 75 years: The USPSTF recommends screening for colorectal cancer to begin at age 45 years up until 75 years.
 - Adults aged 76 to 85 years: The USPSTF recommends that clinicians selectively offer screening for colorectal cancer in adults aged 76 to 85 years after considering comorbidities, longevity, and past colorectal cancer screening results.

Why Get Screened?

- Colorectal cancer is the 2nd leading cause of cancer-related deaths in the United States.
- Decrease the number of people diagnosed with colorectal cancer.
- Reduce deaths.
- Prevent or detect cancer sooner
- Reduce health care spending.

Fun Fact:

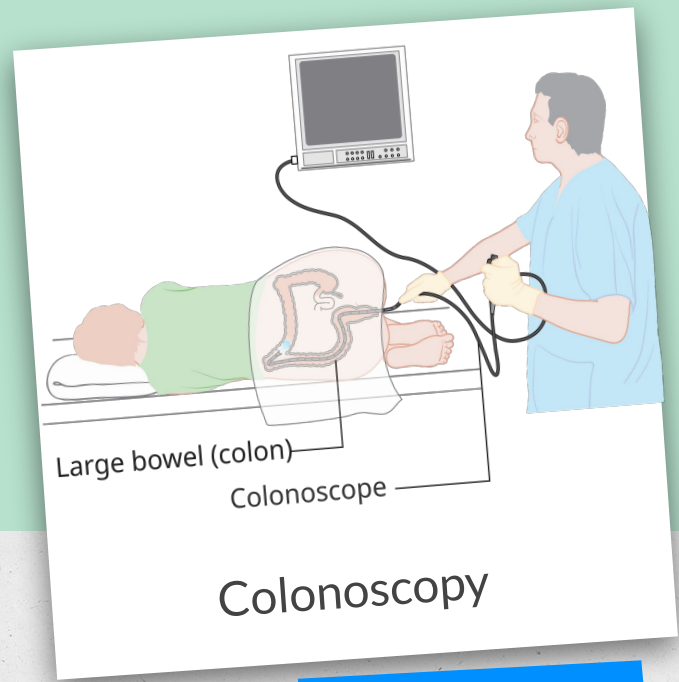
The average length of your colon is around 5-6 feet long.



HOW? Types of Screening Test

- Colonoscopy ★
- Fecal immunochemical test (FIT)
- FIT-DNA test (Cologuard)
- Computed tomographic (CT) colonography

Colorectal cancer screening is safe, effective, and recommended for all adults starting at age 45. Screening for colorectal cancer can help find polyps in the colon and rectum early, sometimes before they become cancer.



Fun Fact:

Just because the doctor found a polyp doesn't mean you have cancer!

Potential Signs and Symptoms of Colorectal Cancer

- Change in bowel habits
- Bleeding from rectum or blood in stool
- Unexplained abdominal pain, aches, or cramps that don't go away
- Unexplained or unintentional weight loss and unsure why
- Iron-deficiency anemia

Fun Fact:

Just because you have these symptoms does NOT mean you have cancer. Always consult your provider and please BE HONEST.



Things that can contribute ...

- Lack of regular physical activity
- A diet low in fruit and vegetables
- A low-fiber and high-fat diet, or a diet high in processed meats
- Overweight and obesity
- Alcohol consumption
- Tobacco use

Things that cannot be changed...

- Age
- Racial and ethnic background
- Sex at birth
- Personal hx of gallbladder removal
- Personal hx of radiation to the abdomen or pelvis
- Crohn's dx or Ulcerative colitis
- Personal or family hx of colorectal CA or colorectal polyps
- Genetic syndrome such as Lynch Syndrome

How to lower the risk....

- GET SCREENED =)
- Eat veggies, fruits, and whole grains
- Regular exercise, take control of your weight.
- Don't smoke
- Limit alcohol consumption

Fun Fact:

Eating fewer red meats
or processed meats
can also decrease your
risk of colorectal
cancer



Remember....

- Colon cancer doesn't always have symptoms
- If you are 45 or older it's time to talk to your provider about options for screening
- Getting screened for colorectal cancer may not seem fun but it can prevent cancer!



Cancer, Prevention, Education, and Screening (CPEST) Program

- 45 and older (under 45 w/ family history &/or symptoms)
- Maryland Resident
- Uninsured, underinsured
- Limited Income

Program Staff:

- Caitlin Kirkpatrick, RN, BSN
Caitlin.Kirkpatrick@maryland.gov
- Nancy Stone
Nancy.Stone@maryland.gov