

Overview of Colorectal Cancer

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What is Colorectal Cancer?

Colorectal cancer is a medical term used to describe abnormal growth of cells in either the colon or the rectum.

What are Some of the Risk Factors for Colorectal Cancer?

- Family history of bowel disease
- Diabetes
- Jewish heritage
- Being over the age of 50
- Obesity and/or smoking
- Physical inactivity

What are Some Common Symptoms of Colorectal Cancer?

- Blood in bowel movements
- Constipation/diarrhea
- Change in bowel movements
- Pain in the abdomen
- Tiredness
- Unexpected weight loss

How is it Diagnosed?

- Stool sample to test for blood
- Sigmoidoscopy or colonoscopy
- Barium enema with X-ray
- Fecal Occult Blood Test (FOBT)
- Fecal Immunochemical Test (FIT)

What are the Stages of Cancer?

- Stage 0: cancer only in colorectal lining
- Stage 1: cancer beyond inner wall
- Stage 2: cancer is outside the colon
- Stage 3: cancer has spread to lymph nodes
- Stage 4: cancer has spread to distant organs

Treatments

- Surgery (sometimes anastomosis or colostomy)
- Chemotherapy
- Radiation
- Biologic Therapy

Can it be Cured?

If detected early, colorectal cancer can be cured with surgery alone. In later stages, often chemotherapy and radiation are necessary. Your chance of cure depends upon how much the cancer has spread. 90 percent of people with stage 2 colorectal cancer will survive five years or longer. The chance of survival decreases with more advanced cancer.