

PUBLIC HEALTH FACT SHEET



Department of Health & Human Services

oakgov.com/health

Colorectal Cancer

What is Colorectal Cancer?

Colorectal cancer is a disease of the lower digestive tract. It can affect either the colon or the rectum. Colorectal cancer is one of the most commonly diagnosed cancers in the United States.

What are the Symptoms of Colorectal Cancer?

- Change in bowel habits
- Feeling that the bowel does not empty completely
- Blood in or on the stool
- Narrow ribbon-like stools
- General abdominal discomfort
- Weight loss
- Fatigue
- Frequent gas or pains

What are the Risk Factors for Colorectal Cancer?

- Age 50 years and older
- Diet that is low in fiber and high in fat
- Family history
- Personal medical history
- Benign growths along the colon wall (Polyps)
- Sedentary life style
- High alcohol intake
- High red meat and processed meat intake



OVER

How is Colorectal Cancer Detected?

- Digital Rectal Exam (DRE) - with lubricated gloved finger inserted into the rectum, a healthcare provider feels for any abnormalities
- Fecal Occult Blood Test (FOBT) - a test that checks for blood in the stool
- Flexible Sigmoidoscopy - a healthcare provider uses a flexible hollow lighted tube to view the rectum and part of the colon
- Colonoscopy - similar to the sigmoidoscopy procedure, except the tube is long enough to view the whole colon
- Double Contrast Barium Enema (DCBE) - a series of x-rays of the colon and rectum. An enema with a solution that contains barium is given. This outlines the colon and rectum on the x-rays

How can the Risk of Colorectal Cancer be reduced?

- Exercise to maintain a healthy weight
- Eat limited amounts of red meat
- Maintain a high fiber, low fat diet
- Daily folic acid intake through diet or multivitamin
- Regular screening as recommended by your physician

How can Colorectal Cancer be treated?

- Surgery - removal of the tumor
- Chemotherapy - use of anticancer drugs to kill cancer cells
- Radiation therapy - use of high energy x-rays to kill cancer cells

The best treatment for you needs to be determined by you and your healthcare provider.

For more information on Colorectal Cancer, call (248) 858-1406 or toll free 1 (800) 848-5533.

For additional copies, visit our website at www.oakgov.com/health