

# Colon Cancer (colorectal cancer)

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## Overview:

- Colorectal cancer is cancer in the colon, appendix, or rectum
- Colon cancer starts in the large intestine or the rectum
- Tumors in the colon or the rectum are growths from the inner wall of the large intestine
- Consists of malignant tumors in the large intestine
- Benign tumors in the large intestine, known as polyps, can become malignant if not removed
- Can invade other organs and tissues all over the body over time
- Once colorectal cancer has metastasized, a complete cure is not likely

## Statistics (2012):

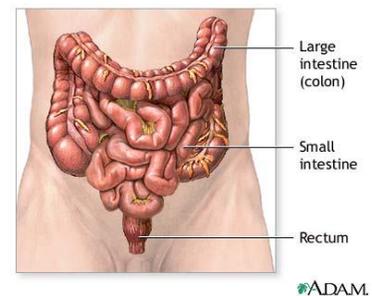
- One of the leading causes of cancer-related deaths in the United States
- Screening is effective in diagnosing it and decreasing the chance of death
- Fourth most commonly diagnosed cancer in the world
- The American Cancer Society estimates about 100,000 new cases in 2012, with about 50,000 deaths

## Symptoms

- Blood in the stool
- Diarrhea or constipation
- Narrow stools
- Weight loss
- Abdominal pain
- Anemia

## Risk Factors

- People of African American or eastern European descent have a higher risk
- Age (older than 60)
- Have cancer in other places of the body
- Have Colorectal Polyps *benign tumors of the large intestine*
- Have inflammatory bowel disease
- Have a family history of colon cancer (genetic preposition)
- A diet of red meat, high fat, and low fiber
- Alcohol, smoking, lack of exercise



## Diagnosis and Treatment

### *Diagnosis*

- Imaging tests such as: colonoscopy *camera examines bowels*, sigmoidoscopy *bowels are examined, can include biopsy*
- Blood tests: Complete Blood Count (can find anemia, a symptom of colon cancer) *counts RBC, WBC, hemoglobin levels*, Liver function test
- After the cancer has spread these tests may be used to see if the cancer has spread: CT scan, MRI scan, PET scan *chest, brain, lungs, abdomen*

### *Treatment*

- Radiation therapy: used with chemotherapy or surgery
- Chemotherapy: Drugs such as Irinotecan, oxaliplatin, capecitabine, and 5-fluororacil
- Surgery: Remove cancer cells,

### Resources

- <http://www.cancer.org/Cancer/ColonandRectumCancer>
- <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmedhealth/PMH0001308/>
- [http://www.medicinenet.com/colon\\_cancer/article.htm](http://www.medicinenet.com/colon_cancer/article.htm)