



# COLORECTAL CANCER: Preventable. Treatable. Beatable!

Colorectal cancer, or colon cancer, is curable 90% of the time when detected and treated early. Beginning at age 50, men and women should have a colorectal cancer screening. If you have other risk factors such as family history of the disease, talk to your doctor or health care provider about more frequent or earlier screening.

## *What Are the Symptoms of Colorectal Cancer?*

Colorectal cancer can strike men and women, young as well as older people. If you are at high risk, don't wait until symptoms appear. Colorectal cancer may not cause symptoms in its early stages so it is best to have regular screenings for detection.

### **Symptoms to watch for include:**

- Unexplained change in bowel habits
- Chronic diarrhea or constipation
- Blood in the stool
- Narrow, pencil thin stools
- A feeling your bowel doesn't empty completely
- Persistent abdominal pain
- Unexpected or sudden weight loss
- Chronic tiredness or unexplained fatigue

## *What Is Colorectal Cancer?*

Colorectal cancer includes cancers of both the large intestine (colon), the lower part of the digestive system and the rectum. The cancer begins as small noncancerous (benign) clusters of cells called polyps. Over a period of time, some polyps may become cancerous.

## *Are You at Risk?*

You have an increased risk of colorectal cancer if you:

- Are age 50 or older
- Have a family or personal history of colorectal cancer and/or polyps
- Have a personal history of inflammatory bowel disease
- Are a smoker
- Are obese or physically inactive
- Eat a diet high in saturated fat and/or red meat



## Be Proactive & Reduce Your Colorectal Cancer Risk<sup>1</sup>

You may reduce your risk of getting colorectal cancer by making these lifestyle changes:

- Exercise regularly; at least 30 minutes three times a week.
- Maintain a healthy body weight.
- Maintain a healthy diet that includes plenty of fruits and vegetables.
- Limit fat, especially saturated fat.
- Avoid smoking.
- Limit alcohol consumption.



<sup>1</sup>American Cancer Society. [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org). *The Complete Guide – Nutrition and Physical Activity*. 2006.

## Screening & Early Detection

Don't let fear or embarrassment stop you from being screened.

Mary Bird Perkins Cancer Center recommends that men and women, beginning at age 50, be screened with one of the examination schedules below:

- A fecal occult blood test (FOBT) or fecal immunochemical test (FIT) every year
- A flexible sigmoidoscopy (FSIG) every 5 years
- Annual FOBT or FIT and flexible sigmoidoscopy every 5 years\*
- A double-contrast barium enema every 5 years
- Colonoscopy every 10 years

*\*Combined testing is preferred over either annual FOBT or FIT, or FSIG every 5 years alone.*

*People who are at moderate or high risk for colorectal cancer should talk with a doctor about a different testing schedule.*

For more information about colorectal cancer, contact your health care provider or Mary Bird Perkins Cancer Center about a free colorectal screening kit.

**(225) 215-1234**

**(888) 616-4687**

**[www.marybird.org](http://www.marybird.org)**

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